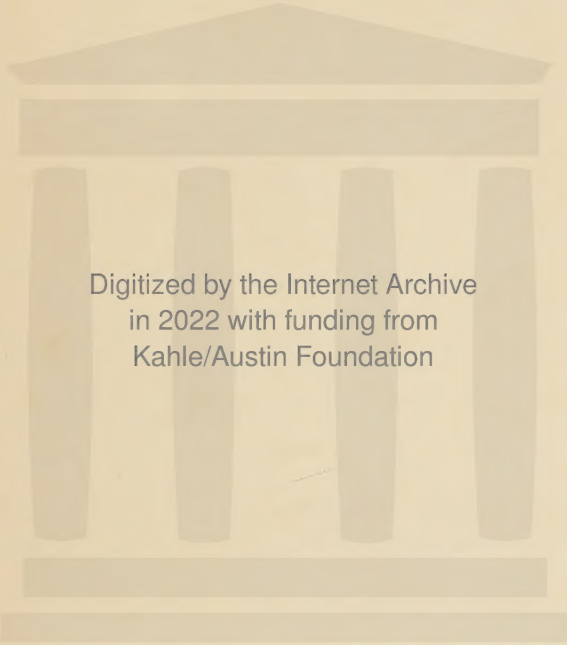


*The Spirit of
Saint Thérèse*



THE SPIRIT OF ST THÉRÈSE
DE L'ENFANT JÉSUS



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SAINT
THÉRÈSE DE L'ENFANT JÉSUS

(FROM A PHOTOGRAPH OF 1895)

« O Jesus, my Love, at last have I found my vocation !
My vocation is love! Yes, I have found my place in the
bosom of the Church, and this place, O my God, Thou
Thyself hast given to me ; in the heart of the Church, my
Mother, I WILL BE LOVE ! »

(*Story of a soul, chap. XI*)

The Spirit of Saint Thérèse

de l'Enfant Jésus

*As shown forth by her Writings and the Testimony
of Eyewitnesses*

*"This favoured servant of God was herself so well
versed in heavenly knowledge, that she could point out
to others the true Way of Salvation."*

H.H. BENEDICT XV.

*Translated at the Carmel of Kilmacud, Stillorgan,
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PREFACE

OF HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL VICO

*Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Rites.*¹

THE publication of the volume "The Spirit of Blessed Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus" is, in my opinion, most opportune, and will do the greatest good.

On August 14, 1921, in that solemn and never-to-be-forgotten assembly when our newly Beatified was declared Venerable, Pope Benedict XV, of great and holy memory, was pleased to bring into fuller light the Way of Spiritual Childhood followed by Sr. Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus. The doctrinal amplitude of his Discourse shows plainly that the Supreme Head of the Church wished to bequeath as a spiritual legacy to all his children this way of evangelical childhood. No further testimony is needed to recommend it to the faithful.

I highly appreciate the serious and methodical form of this treatise on the Spirit of Blessed Thérèse. In its pages is drawn out logically *the* characteristic of her spiritual life, which is *the Love of God, serving as the foundation to her entire edifice of perfection*. From thence the wonderful fecundity of a life to all outward appearances quite ordinary. None of those traits which strike us with amazement, but solid virtue hidden beneath an exterior of charming sim-

¹ Written in March, 1923, for the first edition of this work.

plicity. In this work will be found the very substance of the Process, where, through the least details, is revealed real heroism.

In fine, the impression produced by reading this book is all to the advantage of the moral worth of Thérèse. Her virtue impresses us with indescribable majesty; the little child becomes a hero, the maiden, with her hands full of flowers, amazes us by her virile courage.

Yes, this soul, whose abandonment rejoiced the Heart of God, this soul which surrendered itself without resistance to the operations of His holy will, in a word, this child, all unconscious of her worth, is become great in the eyes of the Most High.

May she exercise every day more and more her influence with the court of heaven on behalf of those who love her and who strive to follow in her footsteps. May she win over also by the charm of her voluntary childhood those whom subtle vanity, or ignorance of truth, turns aside from her luminous and sure way.

"Now is the time of her conquests," and the past has proved beyond a doubt that she will be for many an angel of salvation.

✠ A. CARDINAL VICO,

Bishop of Porto and Santa Rufina.

Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Rites.

LETTER
OF MONSEIGNEUR LEMONNIER
Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux.

HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL VICO, with every mark of kindly benevolence, has set down authoritatively the purpose and scope of the present work.

In my appreciation of the book I shall seek no other inspiration than the words of a Doctor of the Church, St Bonaventure, who gives the following counsel in his *Incendium Amoris*:

"Men skilled in worldly affairs can, in their moments of prayer and meditation, read this book with profit. It will lead them onward beyond all earthly things to the very throne of peace.

"Simple souls, unaided by all other human science, can learn in these pages how to love God, and to make great progress in this holy love."

Those who would follow St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus must be trained at this same school of simplicity, so that, like her, they may penetrate to the very depths of that divine and merciful love. *"Blessed are the pure and simple of heart, for they shall see God."*

✠ THOMAS,
Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux.

April, 1923.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Chap., page : Refers to the " Histoire d'une Âme," French octavo edition, No. 7043, 4, 1923, and subsequent editions.

A. : Letters of St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus addressed to the Rev. Mother Agnès de Jésus (her sister Pauline, her " Petite Mère ").

M. : Letters to Sr Marie du Sacré-Cœur (her eldest sister Marie).

L. : Letters to her sister Léonie.

C. : Letters to her sister Céline.

M. G. : Letters to her cousin Marie Guérin.

F. : Letters to her spiritual brothers.

Date : Dates given alone refer to the notes collected in 1897, during the last months of the saint's life.

CHAPTER I

The Love of God is for St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus the Source of Energy, rendering Fruitful her whole Spiritual Life

"Be zealous for the better gifts. And I show unto you yet a more excellent way.

"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy, and should know all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."¹

"Charity is the bond of perfection.² Charity will never pass away."

"And now there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three: but the greater of these is charity,³ for Love is the fulfilling of the law."⁴

¹ 1 Cor. xii, 31; xiii, 1-3.

³ 1 Cor. xiii, 13.

² Cf. Col. iii, 14.

⁴ Cf. Rom. xiii, 10.

"Let us hearken to what 'PETITE THÉRÈSE' will tell us, she who is become the mouthpiece of God."

H. H. Pius XI.

ARTICLE I

Doctrine of St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus on the Value of Love : it is her Rule and her Law

"My vocation is Love!" exclaimed Thérèse. "Jesus, I would so love Him, love Him as never yet He has been loved. . . ." "O that He may give me Love without bound, without limit!" "At any cost I will cull the palm; if not by shedding my blood, then it must be by Love. . . ." "The science of Love! I want no other science . . . for I have no desire unless it be to love Jesus even to folly!"

Ch. xi, p.
A.,

Sept., 18

Ch. viii,

A.,

Sept.,

Ch. viii,

SAINT THÉRÈSE DE L'ENFANT JÉSUS did not by any means look upon the virtues as leading to Love; it was, on the contrary, from Love that she made all her perfection spring. She bore in mind those words of the Catechism: "God has created me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him." And it was by first loving Him that she afterwards so well served Him.

Faithful to this maxim, she wrote:

"You desire a means of arriving at perfection. I know of one only means: Love."¹

M. G.,

And when someone said to her, "You must have

¹ This response recalls to mind that of St Francis de Sales to a nun who said to him: "I want to acquire love by humility." "And I," replied the Saint, "wish to acquire humility by love."

striven hard to have conquered yourself so completely!" she answered with an indefinable expression: "Oh, that is not it!"

And, indeed, we read in a letter of 1893:

"Certain directors, as I know, recommend counting our acts of virtue in order to advance in perfection; but Jesus, who is my director, does not teach me to count my acts; *He teaches me to do all through love.*"¹

And near her death she will be able to say:

"*Never have I given to the good God aught but love.*"

She knows that "Jesus burns with the desire of entering into our heart," and that He esteems our love above all gifts that we may offer to Him.

"Without love," she writes, "our works, even the most brilliant, count as nothing. Jesus does not demand from us great deeds, but only gratitude and self-surrender; that is to say, Love.

"I have no need, saith He, of thy flocks, for all the beasts of the woods are Mine; if I were hungry I would not tell thee, for the world is Mine and the fulness thereof. Shall I eat the flesh of bullocks or shall I drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving."²

Thérèse remembers that "the least movement of

¹ Certain passages from letters that we give in this collection are not found under the same date in the "Histoire d'une Ame," where only fragments have been printed and portions eliminated to avoid repetition of ideas. These passages, taken from the originals, have themselves undergone revision in order the better to correspond with the subject treated of.

² Cf. Ps. xlix.

pure love is of more value to the Church than all other works united together.”¹ Therefore she will never rely on aught save love, and will judge everything according to love.

Commenting on the passage from the psalm cited above, she had written: “God *has no need of our works, but only of our love*. This very God who declares that He needs not to tell us if He were hungry² did not hesitate to beg of the Samaritan woman a little water. . . . He thirsted. . . . But in saying, ‘Give Me to drink,’³ *it was the love of His poor creature He besought; He thirsted for love.*”

Ch. xi, p.

Again and again she repeats in her letters and her counsels how lovable God is, to what a degree He loves us and seeks our love in return, how delicately considerate He is, and pleased with even little, in fine, how love is the way that leads to perfection.

“It is He who wants our love, who begs for it . . . ” she writes. “He puts Himself, as it were, at our mercy; He will take nothing but what we give Him from our heart, and *the very least trifle* is precious in His sight.” She grounds her assertion on this stanza of St John of the Cross :

C.,
2 Aug., 18

Return, my Dove!
The wounded hart
Looms on the hill
In the *air of thy flight*, and is refreshed.⁴

With the holy Reformer she says: “You see the Spouse, the wounded Hart, is drawn, not by the

“Cons. et
Souv.,” p.

¹ St John of the Cross.

² Ps. xlix, 12.

³ John iv, 7.

⁴ Trans. D. Lewis, M.A.

height, but solely by the *air* of the flight." And she adds: "*A simple stroke of the wing suffices to produce this breeze of love.*"

Concerning these words of the Cantic of Canticles—"Thou hast wounded my heart with *one hair* of thy neck"—she writes again:

"In saying that one hair can work this wonder, Jesus shows us that the *very least* actions done *through love* are those that delight His Heart."

In her opinion, "the most fervent soul is the most faithful in doing all her actions *through love*."

In her poem entitled "The Angels at the Crib" she puts on the lips of the Infant Jesus this avowal:

By loving Me, the least of souls
Becomes to Me a paradise.

Speaking to her novices of a plaything called a kaleidoscope, of which she had studied the working, she explains to them how love alone can give value to their actions:

"So long as our actions, even *the very least*, remain within the *focus of Love*, the Blessed Trinity, which is figured by the three converging mirrors, reflects them, and endows them with a wondrous beauty, so that Jesus finds our proceedings always pleasing to Him. But if we leave the ineffable centre of Love, what will He see? Mere straws . . . actions sullied and nothing worth."

In fine, she repeats with the Apostle that "the most perfect gifts are as nothing without love, that Charity is the most excellent way of going surely to

L.,
2 July, 1896

L.,
Jan., 1895

'Les Anges
à la Crèche,"
p. 483

'Cons. et
Souv.," p. 290

Ch. xi, p. 215

God,"¹ and concludes by again pointing out the part chosen by her: Cf. xlii p.

"I so well understand that *love alone* can render us pleasing to the good God, that this love is the one *only* treasure I desire. Having given all my substance for it, I think I have given nothing."²

Again she says:

"It is not the riches and glory, the glory even of heaven, that my heart craves; what I ask is—*Love*." Id., p. 213

And love it was which, before it became her recompense, was her sole way as well as her aim. Love it was that "inwardly purified her, made her courageous to suffer and steadfast to persevere."³

Again, it was love that, like a soft carpet, covered the ruggedness of the path, and "rendered light that which was heavy, and sweet and pleasant that which was bitter."⁴ Therefore, in choosing this rapid and sure way, has she truly found the philosophers' stone of the ancients, which for her changed all, not into gold, but into *joy*.

It was that she might enable souls to share her treasure that St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus always took care to communicate to others the ardour of her love for God, and the mode of spiritual formation that had so perfectly succeeded for her.

But not during her life only did she make herself the guide of souls towards the perfection of Divine Love: at the point of death she was confident of being able so to employ herself even to the end of time; and when she uttered these words of sublime

¹ Cf. 1 Cor. xiii.

² Cant. viii, 7.

³ "Imit." III, ch. v, 2.

⁴ *Id.*, ch. v, 3.

originality, which, like the device of a cavalier, shall ever remain associated with her memory—" *I will spend my heaven in doing good upon earth*"—no doubt she had in view, above all, the assistance to be given to souls in order to lead them to salvation BY LOVE.

ARTICLE II

Her Principle of Action in Love :

she is

Careful and Eager concerning all that “will give Pleasure to the Good God”

“I have always remained little, having no other occupation than to gather flowers, the flowers of love and sacrifice, and to offer them to the good God *for His pleasure.*” 6 Aug.

Thus did St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus a few days before her death sum up her life of love.

She had written “that she tried to act solely *to delight* our Lord.” Ch. x, p. 1

It is, indeed, to be noted that this thought of *giving pleasure* to Jesus, of *consoling* Him, of *delighting* Him, with her came before all others.

“The great Saints,” she would say, “have worked for the glory of God, but I, who am only a very little soul, I work for *His pleasure alone*. I wish to be, in the hand of the good God, a floweret, a rose of no use, but of which the sight and the fragrance will nevertheless be to Him a refreshment, a little joy superadded.” Souv. inédit

“I would not have wished to pick up a pin for the sake of avoiding purgatory,” she declared another time. “All that I have done was done *to give pleasure to the good God*, to win souls to Him.” 30 July

Elsewhere she says explicitly :

Offrande,
p. 306

“ I have no wish to amass merits for heaven; I wish, O my God, to work for Thy love alone; *my sole aim being to give Thee pleasure, to console Thy Sacred Heart, and to save souls who will love Thee for ever.*”

In speaking of her approaching death, she wrote to her Mother Prioress :

Ch. ix, p. 155

“ Do not think that your child esteems it a greater grace to die at dawn rather than at eventide; that which she esteems, that which alone she desires, is *to give pleasure to Jesus.*”

According to her, perfection is the reward of this kind of love :

L.,
17 July, 1897

“ If you wish to be a saint,” we read in her correspondence with one of her sisters, “ that will be easy for you; have but one sole aim—*to give pleasure to Jesus.*”

Again, it is by reason of this love that she expects assistance from God :

C.,
20 Oct., 1893

“ If you faithfully continue *to give Him pleasure* in the small things, He will feel bound to help you in the greater.”

“ To console Jesus” for the indifference and ingratitude of men—that was her constant occupation. In early childhood she offered herself to Jesus to be His “ little flower.”

Ch. iv, p. 54

“ *I wanted to console Him,*” she says, “ to be regarded, cultivated, and gathered by Him.” Then she “ very frequently offered her heart to Him, strove

Id., p. 26

to please Him in all her actions, taking the utmost care never to offend Him."

In one of her letters we read :

"I do not wish that Jesus should suffer pain; I long, by converting sinners, to dry the tears that they cause Him to shed."

A., 1889

And, in a moment of great anguish :

"Oh, let us not waste our time; let us save souls! 'Souls are falling into hell, innumerable as the flakes of snow on a winter's day,'¹ and Jesus weeps; and we, we are brooding over our own sorrow without thinking of consoling Him!"

C.,
14 July, 1889

She writes :

"The cry of Jesus in agony, 'I thirst!' re-echoed continually in my heart, firing it with an ardent zeal till then unknown to me. I longed to give to my Beloved to drink. . . ."

Ch. v, p. 76

If she desires to save souls, it is, in truth, not only to secure the individual happiness of each one, but also, and above all, to win for Jesus the love of these rescued souls. She writes :

"There is but one only thing to do during the brief day, or rather night, of this life: it is to love, to love Jesus with all the strength of our heart, and to save souls for him, *that so He may be loved.*"

C.,
14 July, 1889

To a novice who confided to her her fear of losing graces by her little daily infidelities, she replies :

"As the good God is all mercy and you have goodwill, it is not you who lose, but He loses love. . . ."

Souv. inédit

¹ St Teresa of Avila.

So that He may not lose any love, she asks one of her spiritual brothers to say each day for her this prayer, "which includes all her desires":

F.,
24 Feb., 1897

"Merciful Father, in the name of Thy sweet Jesus, of the Blessed Virgin and of the Saints, I pray Thee that my sister be fired by Thy Spirit of Love, and that Thou wilt grant her the grace to make Thee greatly loved."

She demands that this prayer may be made for her even after her death, for she adds:

F., 1897

"The only thing that I desire is *to see the good God loved*, and I own that if, in heaven, I could no longer work for this end, I should like exile better than the Fatherland."

But, in the meantime, it is on sacrifice that she counts for the attainment of her end.

Knowing how very few souls are faithful to that sustained attention in small things—sure proof of true love—she would say sadly:

7 Aug.

"Oh, how little is the good God loved on earth! No, the good God is not much loved. . . ."

In her writings she complains:

Ch. xi, p. 210

"More than ever is Jesus *athirst for love* . . . and even amongst his disciples He finds, alas! very few hearts that surrender themselves without any reserve to the tenderness of His infinite love."

It was because she saw to what an extent the love of God is disregarded here on earth that she offered herself as victim to this merciful Love. She meant by this means to open her heart to God as an abyss, which she would have wished infinite, so as to draw

thither all the flames of Divine Charity—repulsed by the greater part of mankind—and to die consumed thereby. It was in wishing thus to “*console God*” that she sought and found the means in multiplied acts of love; “souls on fire cannot remain inactive.”

Ch. x, p. 203

ARTICLE III

Qualities of the Love of God in St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus

SECTION I

Her Love—Assiduous

“Labour as a good soldier of Christ,”¹ said St Paul to his disciple Timothy.

This is to affirm that the rôle of man upon earth is not to enjoy in peace a blissful love, but to fight against the evil tendencies which oppose the reign of God within him, and to extend this divine reign by the activity of a conquering love. So did our little Saint understand it, and in this warfare “against evil tendencies” she hastens, as ever, to reveal to us that love is the end at which she aims.

“It is not,” she says, “*to fashion my crown, or to gain merits and acquire virtues; it is to give pleasure to Jesus by winning souls to Him.*” This is why she sings:

My joy is *the combat unceasing*
To add unto Heaven’s elect. . . .

“O my Jesus! *for Thy sake will I do battle* until the very evening of my life. Since Thou didst not will to enjoy any repose upon earth, I wish to follow Thine example; I burn to fight for Thy glory; fortify my courage, I beseech Thee; arm me for the strife.”

¹ 2 Tim. ii, 3.

C.,
18 July, 1899

“Ma Paix e
ma Joie,”
p. 413

“Priere,”
310-311

Nor will she lay down those arms. Seeing her, a few weeks before death, still renounce self on every occasion, they said to her: "Do you, then, wish to acquire merits?"

18 Aug.

"Oh yes," she replied, "but not for myself: for souls, for the needs of the whole Church; *in fine, that I may shower down roses for everyone, just and sinners.*"

Before going into the details of this warfare waged against Nature step by step, let us hear what our little Saint thinks of our duty in this respect, and we shall see that there is nothing of an indolent quietism in her conception of the perfect life.

She begins by saying:

Ch. x, p. 179

"If I do not undervalue beautiful thoughts that unite the soul to God, yet I have long understood that we must very carefully guard against leaning too much upon them. *The most sublime inspirations are nothing without deeds.*"

Apropos of those words of praise addressed to Judith—"Thou hast done manfully, and thy heart has been strengthened"¹—she makes this observation:

Aug.

"Many souls excuse themselves by saying: 'I have not the strength to make such a sacrifice.' But *let them make efforts!* It is sometimes difficult; but the good God never refuses the first grace, which gives courage to conquer self; if the soul corresponds to it, she will find that she immediately receives

'Cons. et
Souv.,'
p. 266

¹ Judith xv, 11.

light; then the heart is strengthened, and we go from victory to victory.

"Where would be your merit," she said to one of the novices, "if you had to fight only when you felt the courage? What matters it if you have none, provided that you act always as if you had?"

"Cons. et
Souv.,
P. 279

"I want to see you always like a valiant soldier who does not complain of his pains; who thinks very seriously of the wounds of his brothers, and regards his own as mere scratches."

Id., p. 272

Another novice having read this passage from Ecclesiasticus—"All mercy shall make a place for every man according to the merit of his works"¹—she asked her young mistress: "Why is it said, 'according to the merit of his works,' since St Paul speaks of being justified freely by grace?"²

Souv. inédits

Then the servant of God explained with animation that if hope pushed to the furthest limits is composed of holy abandonment and confidence in God, its nutriment is none other than *sacrifice*. And she developed her thought thus:

"We must do all that in us lies, give without counting, *steadily renounce self*; in a word, prove our love by every good deed in our power. But in truth, as that is little enough, it is, above all, necessary to put our confidence in Him who, alone, sanctifies our works, and to acknowledge ourselves 'unprofitable servants,'³ hoping that the good God in His mercy will give us all that we desire."

¹ Ecclus. xvi, 15.

² Rom. iii, 24.

³ Luke xvii, 10.

This last thought will, further on, find its development in the "childlike spirit." But it is well to remark here *that Saint Thérèse had to do battle* in order to "renounce self with constancy," and *that she had need of courage* to defend, in herself, the cause of God against the attacks of contrary inclinations.

This warfare, these oppositions, are found in the life of every saint. It was her wish that it should be put prominently forward, for the consolation and encouragement of "little souls" who are disconcerted by the evil tendencies of Nature.

It was, then, by vigilant and sustained attention that Thérèse made of her life a magnificent efflorescence of virtues. At the conclusion of this study it will be easy to recognize her merit in such or such an action, or form of love, in seeing her tremble in face of a sacrifice, or feel the ruggedness of the strait way that leadeth to heaven. But with what constancy, with what self-command, with what fidelity does she "go from victory to victory," according to her own avowal, "as a giant runs his course!"

See already some incidents in support of this remark:

In her childhood her "extreme sensitiveness" caused her continual suffering. She writes:

"I made troubles for myself out of everything. I shed tears not only when there really was reason, but for the slightest thing. If it happened that I involuntarily gave pain to anyone, instead of taking it aright, I would grieve till I made myself ill, which increased rather than atoned for my fault; and when

I began to feel consoled concerning the fault itself I would weep for having wept."

This disposition, which would have paralyzed her efforts, furnished her with the elements of a great victory which she relates in detail in her *Histoire*.

It was at Christmas, 1886, after the Midnight Mass. An observation overheard "*pierced her to the heart,*" but instead of weeping, as she was wont to do for much slighter causes, behold her suddenly and *courageously force back her tears* even to the extent of *seeming as though she had heard nothing!*

Ch. v, p. 74-75

She had an ardent love of study; but quickly understanding the danger of "this extreme desire to acquire knowledge," she *moderated her desire for secular learning*, and by preference applied herself to spiritual reading.

Id., p. 77-78

Her nature, however, gives her something to fight against. When about to enter the Carmel, being grieved by the disappointment of three months' delay imposed upon her, she is "tempted to take things easy, to live less by rule than hitherto." But grace triumphs; she does not wish to lose "the benefit of the time offered her, and resolves to give herself up more than ever to a serious and mortified life."

Ch. vi, p. 11

Thérèse had a tender and sensitive heart, and she knew, like so many others, the natural desire of loving and of being loved. . . .

At school, "seeing several pupils attach themselves particularly to one of the mistresses, Thérèse wished

Ch. iv, p. 63

to follow their example, without, however, being able to succeed."

Ch. iv, p. 62

Was not this the answer to her *daily prayer*—"O Jesus, change for me into bitterness all the consolations of earth!"¹

Id., p. 63

She did choose a friend amongst her companions, but only to be speedily disappointed in her affection. Very soon recognizing the vanity of human affections, she exclaims:

Id., p. 64

"How I thank God for having made me find only bitterness in the friendships of earth! With a heart like mine, I should have let myself be taken captive and my wings cut; then how should I have been able to fly and be at rest?"²

But she acknowledges that, "when deserted by creatures, she had indeed had some moments of sadness. . . ." There again *her means of combat was prayer*.

"I would go up to the tribune of the chapel," she says, "and find my only consolation in that silent visit. I remember that I often then repeated this line from a beautiful poem my father used to recite for us:

Time is thy ship, and not thy dwelling-place.

The words revived my courage; when I think on these things my gaze pierces into the infinite, it seems to me that already I touch the eternal shore."

Id., p. 55

She owns, however, to "not being favoured at that age with lights from above, as she was later on. I did not then know," she writes, "the joy of sacrifice;

Ch. iii, p. 41.
43

¹ "Imit." III, xxvi, 3.

² Ps. liv, 6.

my soul was far from being matured; I had not enough virtue to rise above my many miseries, and my poor little heart suffered much."

Ch. iii, p. 38

Having entered the Carmel, certain practices of the Rule inspired her with repugnance; but she was all the more exact in observing them.

"During my novitiate," she acknowledged later, "on account of my great timidity, I felt it very difficult to ask permission for certain mortifications customary in our convents, but I was always most faithful in doing so."

2 Sept.

"*I made many efforts, too,*" she writes, "not to excuse myself; my first victory was not grand, *but it cost me much.* A little vase left behind a window, by whom I know not, was found broken. Our mistress, believing me at fault in having left it lying about, told me to be more careful another time; that I failed altogether on the point of order. Without making any answer, I kissed the ground, and afterwards promised to be more exact in future in the matter of order."

Ch. vii, p. 12

"Because I have but little virtue, these small observances, I repeat it, cost me much, and I had need to consider that at the Day of Judgement all would be revealed."

At about this time, also, she "was tempted to seek her own gratification by having a few words with the Mother Prioress. As pretext for so doing, numerous permissions to be asked would suggest themselves to her mind."

Ch. x, p. 182

But the violence of her resistance increased in proportion to that of the temptation. She would "hasten past the Prioress' cell and then take a firm grip of the banisters so that she might not return."

Ch. ix, p. 169

Elsewhere she confesses herself "very imperfect," because when setting to work at painting, if she finds the brushes in disorder, and that a ruler or a pen-knife has disappeared, she is "very near losing patience."

What does she do, then, in order to retain it?

"She takes it with both hands, and gently reclaims the missing objects."

She has experienced the miseries of human frailty, for, describing the temptations of the novices, she adds:

Ch. x, p. 178

"I should not be able so well to describe these unfortunate sentiments of human nature if I myself had not experienced them."

But she conquered them, as is again proved by the following instance:

Ch. ix, p. 172

Conscious of a very strong natural antipathy for one nun of the community, who "has the faculty of displeasing her in all things, she does not wish to yield to these feelings," and here is the ingenious stratagem she employed for months, until the victory was complete:

"I set myself to do for this Sister what I would have done for the person I love best. Each time I met her I prayed to the good God for her; but I did not content myself with that; I tried to render her

every possible service, and, when tempted to answer her in a disagreeable manner, I hastened to give her an amiable smile. Often, too, when the demon tempted me violently and I could slip away without her perceiving my interior struggle, I would take to flight, like a deserting soldier. . . .”

Ch. ix, p. 17

She laughingly declares that “this last means, so little honourable, has always, with her, succeeded perfectly.”

She volunteered to lead an infirm Sister every evening to the refectory, admitting, however, that “*it had cost her much* to offer her services.”

Ch. x, p. 193

In face of trials more interior, her attitude is always as energetic. Concerning her temptations against faith she writes :

“On each fresh occasion of combat, when the enemy desires to challenge me, I conduct myself valiantly : knowing that to fight a duel is an unworthy act, I turn my back upon my adversary without ever looking him in the face ; then I run to Jesus and tell Him I am ready to shed every drop of blood in testimony of my belief that there is a heaven. He well knows that I strive to work by faith, though bereft of its consolations. I have made more acts of Faith within this last year than during all the rest of my life.”

Ch. ix, p. 16

But she confides to us in what distress these works are accomplished, and these acts repeated.

“When I sing of the happiness of heaven, of the eternal possession of God, I experience no joy, for I sing simply that which I wish to believe.”

Id., p. 161

Even her Communion, which she so greatly desires, bring her no sensible consolation, but she does not omit to do her best in preparation for them. See how she changes her poverty into riches :

Ch. viii, p.
140

“ I imagine my soul to be as a plot of waste ground and beg the Blessed Virgin to remove from it all the rubbish—meaning its imperfections; then I entreat her to erect thereon a vast canopy worthy of heaven, to decorate it with her own treasures, and I invite all the angels and saints to come and sing canticles of love. It seems to me then that Jesus is pleased to see Himself so magnificently received, and I—I share His joy.

“ All this does not hinder distractions and drowsiness from coming to molest me; therefore it not infrequently happens that I resolve to continue my thanksgiving all the day long, since I have made it so badly in choir.”

“ Cons. et
Souv.,”
p. 302

A novice told her that she had begged the Blessed Virgin to send her, at a moment of trial, a consoling dream. “ And I have been heard,” she added. The servant of God replied with animation :

“ Ah, that is a thing I should never do, ask for consolation ! . . . Since you wish to be like me, you well know what I say :

“ Vive
d'Amour,”
p. 381

“ O fear not, Lord, that I shall waken Thee ;
I await in peace th' eternal shore. . . .

It is so sweet to serve the good God in the dark night of trial; we have this life only in which to live by faith.”

She tells us her manner of acting :

“In times of aridity, when I feel nothing, am incapable of praying, of practising virtue, *I seek little opportunities, mere trifles*, to give pleasure to Jesus; for instance, a smile, a kindly word when inclined to be silent and to show weariness. If I find no opportunities, I at least tell Him again and again that I love Him. . . .”

C.,
18 July, 1893

Still, there are times when the atmosphere of the soul becomes dull and heavy, when the clouds hang low above our heads; then “everything wearies us, everything is a burden” outwardly, whilst we behold nothing within but the dismal sight of our weaknesses. Thérèse will not escape this trial, which becomes to her yet another motive of great confidence, and, comparing herself to a wee bird leaving the nest, she will make this humble prayer:

C.,
12 March,
1889

“Very often, O my God, do I allow myself to be distracted from my sole occupation; I go away from Thee, I wet my scarce-formed little wings in the miserable pools of water that I meet with upon the earth. Then ‘I cry like a young swallow’;¹ my wailing tells Thee all, and Thou dost remember—O infinite mercy!—that ‘Thou art not come to call the just, but sinners.’ ”²

Ch. xi, p. 220

She always places herself in this class of the helpless, of the miserable who have immense need of an “infinite mercy”; at the same time she never fails in the duty of drawing down this divine mercy upon her “erring brethren” by constant effort in the practice of virtue. Never for a single moment will

¹ Isa. xxxviii, 14.

² Matt. ix, 13.

she consent to quit the arena of spiritual combat;
she wishes—

“ Mes
Armes,”
p. 415

. . . to die on the battle-plain,
Arms in hand!

SECTION II

Her Love—Generous

Ch. xi, p. 217

“ O my God, I know it!” exclaimed our dear Saint. “ ‘ Love is repaid by love alone ’ ;¹ therefore I have sought, I have found, how to ease my heart by rendering Thee love for love.”

She “ *had sought it*,” and she had at first thought to find it in active work for souls.

Souv. inédits

During her journey to Rome a pilgrim passed on to her some annals of missionary nuns. After having accepted them with enthusiasm, she gave them to her sister, saying :

“ I will not read them, for I have too keen a desire to consecrate myself to works of zeal, and I wish to be hidden in a cloister so as *to give myself* more completely to the good God.”

She meant, by that, to sacrifice all the consolations and satisfactions of an active apostolate. It is thus that she “ *had found* how to ease her heart ” by a greater sacrifice of herself.

Eventually she will say :

Notes
inédites

“ It is solely the entire immolation of self that can be called Love.”

And, writing of her youth :

¹ St John of the Cross,

“ When perfection began to unfold itself to me, I understood that to become a saint it is necessary to suffer much, ever to seek after that which is the most perfect, and to forget self. I understood that in sanctity the degrees are many, *that each soul is free to respond to the advances of our Lord, to do little or much for His sake*; in a word, to *choose* between the sacrifices that He asks; and I cried out: ‘ I do not want to be a saint by halves; *the thought of suffering for Thee, my God, does not frighten me*. One thing only I fear—my own will; take Thou my will, for *I choose all that Thou wiltest*.’ ”

Ch. i, p. 15

This practice of generosity in Love Thérèse had made her own while yet a child. She who has declared that “ from three years of age ” she had “ refused nothing to the good God ” wrote shortly before her first Communion :

“ Cons. et
Souv
p. 266

“ I try every day to make *a great many little sacrifices*. *I do my best not to let any opportunity escape me*. I want the little Jesus to feel so well pleased in my heart on the eighth of May that He may think no more of going back to heaven.”

A.,
Feb., 1884

Later on she writes :

“ Let us give, let us give to Jesus, *let us be lavish* towards Him. . . .”

C.,
2 Aug., 1893

And a few weeks before her death she again confides to one of her sisters: “ I make many little sacrifices.”

6 July

She had said :

“ To all ecstasies I prefer the monotony of humble sacrifice.”

A., 1889

Ch. xi, p. 218

And when, in her *Histoire*, she writes that deeds of renown are not for her, that she cannot preach the Gospel, shed her blood. . . . "What matter?" she exclaims. "I, *the little child*, keep quite close to the Royal Throne, I love for those who fight. . . . O my God, no other means have I of proving my love than *to strew flowers*; that is, *to let no little sacrifice escape me, not a look, not a word; to avail of the very least actions and do them for Love. Not one of these flowers shall I find without shedding its petals for Thee! . . .*"

Such is the programme that she followed to the letter. The second and third divisions of this work will give a few instances of her acts of virtue, without, of course, exhausting a subject which occupies, in part, the 2,500 pages of the Process of Beatification and Canonization of the Servant of God. Besides, the aim of the present work is to bring out *the spirit of the Saint*, not her works properly so called.

This spirit, it was *Love*, "generous love that knows not measure, and, like unto water that boils, overflows on all sides."¹

Bodily afflictions visit her frequently, sufferings of heart no less than of soul are allotted to her in very large measure, and yet she almost regrets the troubles and temptations which have not even touched the surface of her soul. . . . She desires the trials that she has been spared! . . .

¹ Cf. "Imit." III, v. 4.

“Mine is not an insensible heart,” she writes, Ch. ix, p. 163
 “and just because of its capacity to suffer deeply I
 would offer to Jesus every kind of suffering that it
 could endure.”

The same attraction drew her towards the Carmel
 of Indo-China, where she was earnestly begged for.

“Here I am loved, and this affection is, to me, Id., p. 163-4
 very sweet; see, then, why I long for a convent where
 I should be unknown, where I should have to suffer
exile of the heart.”

“I would go to Hanoi in order to suffer a great 15 May
 deal for the good God; I would go there so as to be
 all alone, so as not to have any consolation, any joy
 on this earth.”

We know how much she desired to die, so as to go
 to her God, to see Him, and to be united to Him for
 ever, how “her heart was wellnigh breaking for joy” Ch. ix, p. 157
 when she heard the first call to the eternal nuptials.
 And yet she makes this avowal:

“Never have I asked the good God to let me die
 young; that would have appeared to me cowardly.”

In truth, if Jesus has said that “Greater love than
 this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for
 his friends,”¹ we ought, for love of the same Jesus,
 to be ready to give our life, not only once for all by
 death, but little by little in a long exile here below.”

Thérèse understood this, and she affirmed:

“I am free, I have no fear, and if it gives pleasure Id., p. 169
 to the good God I willingly consent to see my life of

¹ John xv, 13.

suffering, both of soul and body, prolonged for years. I do not fear a long life, I do not shun the combat. 'The Lord is the rock upon which I am founded who teacheth my hands to fight and my fingers to war. He is my protector in whom I have hoped.'"¹

Ch. ix, p. 162

"God often is satisfied with our desire of labouring for His glory, and my desires have truly been great. . . . Yes, I would be ready to fly away to another battlefield if the Divine General made known to me His wish for it; a command would not be necessary; a mere look, a sign would suffice."

In her eagerness to draw others to love the good God, our Saint writes:

Ch. xi p. 214

"I would desire to be a missionary not only for a few years, but to have been one from the creation of the world, and so to continue to the end of time."

Yet, as she well knows—

"Glose sur le
Divin," p.
410

In the path that we must follow
Meet we dangers many. . . .

She knows human frailty is great, and that the soul during the course of a long life risks being sullied many a time; but nothing can outweigh her zeal. "God will repair all," she declares, "if—

Id.

"'Mid the clouds and the darkness of exile,
Thro' love, I am willing to live."²

Is it not the same thought that we find in these words of the great Teresa of Avila? "Since I have been charged with numerous undertakings, I commit many more faults, and yet, as I fight bravely and

¹ Cf. Ps. cxliii, 1, 2.

² St John of the Cross.

spend myself for God alone, I feel that I draw nearer and nearer to Him."

Proceeding with the enumeration of her sublime desires, Saint Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus exclaims :

"Like the Prophets and the Doctors, I would fain enlighten souls. Fain would I travel the earth, O my Beloved, to preach Thy Name and to set up Thy glorious Cross in pagan lands. One mission only would not suffice for me; would that I could at one and the same time proclaim Thy Gospel all the world over, even to the remotest of its islands. . . .

Ch. xi, p. 214

"Above all do I long for martyrdom; but there again is my folly, for I desire not one kind of torment alone; to satisfy me I should have all. . . .

"Like Thee, my adored Spouse, I would be scourged, crucified. . . . I would be flayed like St Bartholomew; like St John I would be plunged into boiling oil; I desire, like St Ignatius of Antioch, to be ground by the teeth of wild beasts, in order to become a bread worthy of God; with St Agnes and St Cecilia I would hasten gladly to put my neck beneath the sword of the executioner; and, like Joan of Arc, murmur the name of Jesus at the stake. If my thoughts turn to the unprecedented torments which are to fall to the share of the Christians at the time of Antichrist, my heart thrills; I would that these torments might be set apart for me. Open, O my Jesus, Thy Book of Life, wherein are recorded the deeds of all the Saints; those deeds would I fain have accomplished for Thee."

This passage, vibrating with enthusiasm, "fire

and flames of the Lord,"¹ seems well to express all the burning generosity of our Saint. Nevertheless, Thérèse does not see therein expression of the sentiments which are the most pleasing to God, and explains this in the following lines addressed to her eldest sister. These lines, though somewhat outside the present subject, will prove consoling for souls in other respects most generous, who might be discouraged by such sentiments.

M.,
17 Sept., 1896

"How can you ask me if it be possible to love the good God as I love Him? . . . My desires of martyrdom are nothing. Not to them do I owe the unbounded confidence that I feel in my heart. In truth, such desires might be called those 'spiritual riches that render unjust'² when we rest self-satisfied therein and think them something grand. . . . They are consolations that Jesus sometimes grants to weak souls like mine—and of such souls there are many. But when He withholds this consolation it is a special grace. Jesus said: 'Father, if Thou wilt, remove this chalice from Me. . . .'³ How can you now think that these desires are the proof of my love? Full sure am I that this is not by any means what pleases the good God in my little soul. *What pleases Him is to see me love my littleness and my poverty; to see the blind trust that I have in His mercy. . . .* There is my *sole* treasure; why should not this treasure be yours?"

Here already, thus summarized, is the whole spirit of the "Way of Childhood."

¹ Cf. Cant. viii, 6.

² Luke xvi, 2.

³ Luke xxii, 42.

SECTION III

Her Love—Unselfish

“I am not selfish; it is the good God that I love, it is not myself.” 27 July

What St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus thus said two months before her death she had constantly proved by her life.

“Beg of Jesus that I may love Him with a disinterested love,” she wrote during her novitiate; “I desire no sensible consolation in loving; *provided that Jesus feel my love* I am content.” A., 1890

And during her retreat before Profession:

“Your child tastes not at all the ‘sweet wine of the vineyards of Engaddi,’¹ but ask that she may give of it to her Spouse by saving souls, and she will be consoled.” A., Sept., 1890

“My soul remains in darkness, but I am glad, *yes, truly glad, to be without any consolation*; I should be ashamed if my love resembled that of a worldly fiancée looking out for presents from her betrothed, or eagerly watching his countenance for the loving smile that delights her. Thérèse, the little fiancée of Jesus, *loves Jesus for Himself*.” Id.

To her eldest sister she wrote this note:

“Your child scarce hears the harmonies of heaven; her bridal journey is indeed sombre. Perhaps you will think that this grieves her; but no; on the contrary, *she is happy to follow her Fiancé for Himself*” M., 4 Sept., 1890

¹ Cf. Cant. i, 13.

alone, not because of His gifts. And this because He is so beautiful, so entrancing, even when He is silent, even when He conceals Himself."

This happiness, enjoyed in the complete forgetfulness of self, our Saint called "love pushed even unto heroism."

C.,
14 July, 1889

Id. "Let us love Jesus," she counsels her youngest sister, "enough to suffer all that He wills, even aridity and apparent indifference. *It is great love to love Jesus without feeling the sweetness of this love, it is a martyrdom. . . .* Well, then, let us die martyrs! . . ."

C.,
May, 1890

"O my little sister, let us be detached from earth, let us hover over the Mount of Love, where dwells the beautiful Lily of our souls. *Let us detach ourselves from the consolations of Jesus, that we may be attached to Him alone!*"

C.,
2 Aug., 1893

It made her sad to think "how very few were the friends of Jesus when He remained silent before His judges."¹

C.,
7 July, 1894

" . . . For many serve Him when He gives them consolation, but *few* consent to bear Him company *when He sleeps on the storm-tossed waves*, or when He suffers in the garden of Gethsemani. Who, then, will serve Jesus for Himself? Ah! it shall be Thérèse. . . ."

That which St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus practised so well she taught to her novices. One of them, having told her that she was going to confide her

¹ Matt. xxvi, 65.

troubles to Jesus and weep at His feet, that He, at least, would always understand and console her, the servant of God replied :

“ Shed tears before the good God ! Take care you do no such thing. Far less before Him than before creatures ought you to exhibit signs of sadness. He has but our monasteries, this dear Master, to rejoice His Heart ; He comes to us to find a little repose, to forget the continual lamentations of His friends in the world, who, for the most part, instead of recognizing the value of the Cross, meet it with repining and with tears ; and would you behave like the generality of people ? . . . Frankly, that is not disinterested love ; in disinterested love it is *for us to console Jesus, not for Jesus to console us*. . . . He is, I know, so kind of heart that if you weep He will dry your tears ; but afterwards He will go away sorrowful, not having been able to find in you the repose He sought.”

She writes concerning her retreat before Profession :

“ Ah, rarely indeed do I see souls suffer Him to sleep tranquilly within them. This good Master is so weary from continually making advances that He eagerly avails Himself of the repose I offer Him. No doubt He will sleep on until my great eternal retreat ; but that, instead of paining, causes me extreme delight.”

She writes again :

“ In my soul’s intercourse with Jesus there is nothing—nothing but dryness and sleep ! Since my Beloved also wills to sleep, I shall not hinder Him ; I am too happy in seeing that He does not treat me

“ Cons. et
Souv.”
p. 273-4

Ch. viii, p.
131

A.,
Jan., 1889

like a stranger, that He is not constrained with me, for I assure you He does not make efforts to keep up a conversation with me!"

And she confides to the Blessed Virgin :

"Pourquoi je
t'aime,"
p. 429

All that He hath given me may Jesus take again,
O tell Him, Mother, ne'er to feel in aught constrained
with me;
He may hide Him if He will, in peace shall I remain
Till the Day that knows no setting, when faith shall cease
to be.

This faith underwent in her soul a most severe trial which was welcomed, this, too, and above all, with a disinterested love, as these words prove :

Ch. ix, p. 160

"The more intense the suffering, and the less apparent to human eyes, the more lovingly dost Thou smile upon it, O my God. And even—supposing an impossibility—if *Thou wert unaware of it, I would still be happy to suffer*, in the hope that by my tears I might perhaps prevent or make reparation for one single sin against Faith."

Later on, in the same sense, she says :

"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 296

"If the impossible were possible, and God did not Himself see my good actions, I would not grieve for that. I love Him so much that I should like to give Him pleasure *without His knowing it was I*. . . . Knowing and seeing it, He is, in a way, bound to repay me. . . . I should like not to give Him the trouble."

Even at the time of Holy Communion Jesus asked of her this disinterestedness :

Ch. viii, p. 140

"There are no moments," she declares, "in which I feel less consolation—and is not this very natural, seeing that my desire is to receive the visit of Jesus

not for my satisfaction, but solely for His good pleasure?"

She knew that on earth prayer is sometimes a wearying effort, and that to persevere therein with this disposition is to bear Jesus company in the garden of Gethsemani. To a novice who said she was glad of her retreat so as to enjoy a little rest she replied :

"You go into retreat, then, to rest yourself? I go so as to give more to the good God. . . . Remember that most true word of the *Imitation*: 'So soon as a man seeketh himself doth he fall away from love.'"¹

Souv. inédits

"The glory of Jesus," she wrote, "that is my whole ambition; my own I abandon to Him, and if He seem to forget me—well, He is free to do so, since I am mine no more, but His. He will weary sooner of making me wait than I of waiting for Him!" A touching challenge to the Heart of Jesus, one which shall not remain unanswered. . . .

A., 1892

This reflection was proposed to her on the subject of the eternal reward: Suppose the joys of heaven should fall short of her expectation? . . . Oh, what matters it to Thérèse?

"Only to see the good God happy," she exclaims; "that will suffice fully for my happiness."

15 May

One day when our Saint was scattering rose petals before the crucifix in the quadrangle she was asked

¹ "Imit." III, v, 7.

if she did so with the intention of obtaining some favour.

11 June

"Oh no!" she replied quickly; "*it is to give pleasure to Jesus; I do not wish to give for the sake of receiving.*"

"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 289

"At Sext," she had confided to a novice, "there is one verse that I utter unwillingly each day. It is this: *Inclinavi cor meum ad faciendas justificationes tuas in æternum, propter retributionem.*¹ Interiorly I hasten to say: 'O my Jesus, Thou knowest well that it is not for the reward I serve Thee, but solely because I love Thee, and for the sake of saving souls.' "

"Vivre
d'Amour,"
p. 380

To live Love's life, 'tis not to seek reward,
Nor measure what we give, nor think it lost;
Giving, I count not; certain am I, Lord,
That whoso loves Thee ne'er will count the cost.

She does not even desire that God should love her with a love of preference, thinking that He will be happier by remaining at liberty in regard to His gifts. She writes, on the subject of the souls entrusted to her:

Ch. x, p. 202

"O my God, if one day in heaven I find that Thou dost love them more than me, I shall rejoice, since such is Thy good pleasure."

She has already said that, notwithstanding her eager longing to see God, the prospect of a long life did not frighten her.

¹ Ps. cxviii, 112: "I have inclined my heart to do Thy justifications for ever, because of the reward."

Without fearing repetition, this thought, which so well portrays the true character of St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus, shall more than once be put forward in relief.

"Suppose," she says, "that the good God should say to me: 'If you die now you shall have a very high degree of glory; if you die at eighty years of age your glory shall be much less, but the pleasure to Me far greater.' Oh, then I would not hesitate to reply: 'My God, I wish to die at eighty, for I do not seek my glory, but only Thy pleasure.'"

16 July

The same absolute disinterestedness led her to assert:

"If I recovered I should not feel any disappointment."

9 June

"To return to health! If God willed it so, I should be happy in giving Him that pleasure. . . ."

18 Aug

One day, when she seemed to rejoice at being considered worse by the doctor, the infirmarian remarked: "See now, it is clear that you would rather die than live."

"Oh no!" she replied eagerly. "I assure you that if I recovered I would say from the depths of my heart: 'I am greatly pleased to be cured, so as still to serve the good God upon earth, since it is His will. I have suffered as if I were about to die; well, I shall begin over again another time!'"

5 Sept.

SECTION IV

Her Love—Delicate

"God loveth a cheerful giver,"¹ says the Apostle, replying to this complaint of the prophet: "You have covered the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and groaning, so that I have no more a regard to sacrifice, neither do I accept any atonement at your hands."² What He desires is that "in every gift you show a cheerful countenance."³

Wishing to give to God *what He loves, what He desires*, St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus made it her study to *smile* always at a sacrifice.

Interpreting this passage of Holy Scripture—"What shalt thou see in the Sulamitess but choirs of music in an army encamped?"⁴—she wrote:

"Yes, our life is in truth a field of battle. We lament on the banks of the rivers of Babylon: 'How shall we sing the song of the Lord in a strange land?'⁵ And yet sing we must; our life must be one continual melody. . . ."

We read in one of her poems:

If I carry the arms of warrior bold,
If I battle as he for the right,
Like to maiden of graces manifold
Will I *sing* in the midst of the fight.

* * * * *

¹ 2 Cor. ix, 7.

³ Cf. Eccles. xxxv, 11.

⁵ Ps. cxxxvi, 4.

² Malach. ii, 13.

⁴ Cf. Cant. vii, 1.

*Smiling, I brave the grapeshot fire,
And held to Thy Heart, Divine Spouse, shall
stand,
And singing, die on the battlefield,
Arms in hand!*

And in her *Histoire*, recognizing, with a regret that was peaceful and full of love, that her works of virtue do not equal the vehemence of her desires for perfection, she exclaims, comparing herself to a wee child :

“Well, the little child will strew flowers, will embalm with their fragrance the divine throne, will *sing* with silvery voice the Canticle of Love!

Ch. xi, p. 218

“Yes, *I will sing, I will always sing*, even if my roses must be gathered in the very midst of thorns, and the longer and sharper the thorns, *the sweeter shall be my song.*”

She knows intuitively that this delicacy of love will be fruitful :

“How, my Jesus, shalt Thou be served by my songs and my flowers? Ah, well do I know it; this fragrant shower, these fragile petals of no worth, these *songs of love*, though from a heart so little as mine, will delight Thee nevertheless. Yes, these little nothings will make Thee smile. They will make the Church triumphant smile, who, gathering these scattered rose petals and making them pass through Thy divine hands so as to impart to them an infinite value, will shower them upon the Church suffering, to extinguish the flames, and upon the Church militant, to give her the victory.”

Id.

At fourteen years of age she already wrote in the same sense :

A., 1887

"When I think that, for one trial borne *with joy*, we shall love the good God more for all eternity!"

And see, expressed under another form, the delicacy of her love in time of trial; the more Jesus appears to forget her, the more does she show Him her joy:

"L'abandon,"
p. 420

And if Thou shouldst leave me,
O Treasure, dear, divine,
Yet will I smile in gladness,
Though no caress be mine. . . .
And Thy return, sweet Jesus,
I will await in peace,
Nor shall my canticles of love
E'er for a moment cease.

Again:

Mon Ciel à
Moi,"
p. 401

My Heaven is, to *smile* on the God I adore,
When He hideth Himself my faith to prove;
To *smile*, awaiting His return once more—
My Heaven is Love!

To the refinement of her love she joins an ineffable tenderness which, above all, manifests itself in hours of pain, as is shown by the following example.

Recalling those words in the Apocalypse—"I will come to thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know at what hour"¹—she loved during her last illness to give to Jesus the title of "divine Thief." One day, finding her worse, they said to her: "Well, to-day you see the 'Thief,' and certainly you are glad."

6 July

"Oh, even though I should not see Him," she answered, "I love Him so much that I am always pleased with what He does. I should love Him none

¹ Apoc. iii, 3.

the less even if He did not come to steal me; on the contrary . . . *when He disappoints me I pay Him all manner of compliments; He no longer knows how to act with me.*"

We read in one of her poems :

My love with doubled ardour burns,
When He from my faith's vision flies.

Ma Paix e
ma Joie,"
p. 412

"If you knew how gently the good God will deal with me at the judgement," she said another time. "But if He is the least wee bit severe, I who know Him so well will find Him gracious all the same. I assure you that if it enter into His designs to put me in purgatory, I shall be quite content. I know what I shall do then : I shall imitate the three children in the furnace, and shall walk about in mine *singing the Canticle of Love.*"

8 July

"I am already thinking that if I be not surprised enough on reaching heaven, *I shall feign surprise* to delight the good God. . . . No fear that I shall let Him see I am disappointed; *I shall know well how to act so that He may not perceive it.*"

15 May

Through refinement of love, she wished never to complain of the inconveniences of life, even by the simple words "It is indeed cold" or "It is too hot."

"The good God," she said, "who so loves us has pain enough in being obliged to leave us on earth to fulfil our time of trial, without our constantly telling Him of our discomfort; we must appear not to notice it."

Souv. inédits

If suffering from extreme cold in winter, or from excessive heat, she had this delicate thought—not to

rub her hands or wipe her face "except by stealth," as she one day confided to someone, "as though not to give the good God time to see her. . . ."

In like manner, when she applied herself to an exercise of penance prescribed by the Rule: "I forced myself to *smile* at it," she confesses, "so that the good God, deceived, as it were, by the expression of my countenance, might not know that I suffered."

"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 274

She thus reproved a novice who was pitying herself: "Jesus loves the joyous heart, he loves the ever-smiling soul.

"When, then, will you know how to hide your troubles from Him or to tell Him in joyous strains that you are happy to suffer for Him?"

With this idea in mind, she refrained from expressing to the good God a desire concerning temporal favours, "for fear," she said, "of grieving Him ever so little if He saw that He must refuse her something." If, however, she did ask, she hastened to assure Him: "If Thou dost not grant my desire, I shall only love Thee all the more!"

15 Aug.

With regard to a prayer she had been constrained to make during her illness, and which, granted, would have made her very happy, she hesitated, and then:

4 June

"I did not address myself to the good God," she said with a sublime naïveté, "because I wish to let Him do as He wills; I have asked it of the Blessed Virgin, and this is not at all the same thing; she takes note of my little desires, she mentions them or

does not mention them; it is for her to see to it that the good God be not forced to hear me."

She wishes to act in the same manner, later on, when in heaven:

"Before hearing those," she said, "who will pray to me, I shall begin by looking well in the eyes of the good God to see if I ask something contrary to His will."

Souv. inédits

We must not, however, think that this so delicate love cost her no effort. One day when someone was astonished by her generosity in accepting the divine desertions, and anguish of heart, she replied, amongst other things:

"If on these occasions I repeat the more earnestly to the good God and to all the Saints that I love them, believe me, *it is in spite of what I feel at the first moment.*"

25 Aug.

It was then that she paid to God "all sorts of compliments," which completely veiled the temptation against the divine goodness. Words like these abound in her *Histoire*:

"O Jesus, who can tell with what tenderness, with what sweetness Thou hast guided my little soul! . . ." And immediately afterwards she nevertheless admits that "the tempest loudly rages, that for her it is night, always darkness profound."

Ch. xi, p. 211

She would have thought that she failed in tenderness towards her Father in heaven if she did not consider herself very well provided for in every respect.

"Whatever the good God has given me has always

14 July

'Cons. et
Souv.,'
p. 297

pleased me," she says, "even the things which have appeared less good and less beautiful than those given to others."

And when someone said to her: "You have had many trials to-day."

14 Aug.

"Yes," she replied, "but then, I love them! . . . I love all the good God gives me."

The habit of praising the Lord of all in all things greatly helped her in the practice of fraternal charity.

Tempted to dwell upon the faults of an uncongenial neighbour, she immediately thinks of the pleasure "praise of His works" will give to Jesus, and see how she acts towards one of her companions:

Ch. ix, p. 172

"Each time that I met this Sister I prayed to the good God for her, offering to Him all her virtues and her merits. I well knew that this greatly pleased Jesus; for there is no artist who does not like his work praised, and the divine Artist of souls is pleased when we do not stop at the exterior, but, penetrating even to the inmost sanctuary which He has chosen for His dwelling, we admire its beauty."

Finally, she sums up all in these words:

Notes
inédites

"At my death, when I shall see the good God, so good, who will shower upon me the tenderest love throughout all eternity, and when I shall never more be able to give Him proof of mine, by sacrifices; this will be impossible for me to bear, if on earth I shall not have done all I could *to give Him pleasure.*"

SECTION V

Her Love—Exclusive

“Love is strong as death: jealousy is hard as hell,”¹ the Holy Spirit tells us in the sacred canticle. Therefore do we notice in St Thérèse de l’Enfant Jésus a holy jealousy to exclude from her heart all other love but that of the Beloved, and to sanctify through Him her legitimate affections.

This blessed tendency she shows from her early youth. Let us hear her speak of that period of her life which followed her first Communion:

“I felt a great desire to love none but the good God, to find no joy *but in Him alone*.” Ch. iv, p. 61

“How can a heart given up to human affection be united intimately to God? That, I feel, is not possible. I have seen so many souls, deluded by this treacherous light, dart into it like the poor moth and burn their wings, then return wounded to Jesus, the Divine Fire which burns without consuming.” Id., p. 64

She immediately states that our Lord has been pleased to realize her desire, that “the deceitful glamour of the love of creatures had never shone before her eyes, that He always, *He alone*, was her ineffable sweetness.” Id., p. 62-64

So soon as love awoke in my young heart,
Thou camest, Lord, to claim it as Thine own . . .
And needing for my love the Infinite,
None could content me save *Thyself alone*.

Un lis au
milieu des
épines,¹
p. 416

“Yes, Jesus was my *sole* Friend; *I knew not how to talk save to Him alone*; all conversations, even pious conversations, wearied my soul.” Ch. iv, p. 68

¹ Cant. viii, 6.

During the retreat before her Reception she writes to Mère Agnès de Jésus :

A.,
Jan., 1889

"*Jesus alone is all-absorbing*, and He wishes to show me that I would deceive myself in seeking elsewhere a shadow of beauty which I might take for the Divine Beauty itself. How good He is to me, He who will soon be my Fiancé ! How divinely lovable is He in not permitting me to become captive to anything of earth !

"I do not will that creatures should possess a single atom of my love ; I want to give all to Jesus, since He makes me understand that He alone is perfect happiness, even when seemingly He is absent. . . .

"If you only knew to what a degree I wish to be indifferent to the things of earth ! What matters to me all created beauty ? Unfortunate should I be were I to possess it. . . . Oh, how great seems my heart when I consider it in relation to this world's goods, since all of them put together could never satisfy it ; but when I look at it with reference to Jesus, how small it appears to me then. . . . I would so love Him !"

It is, however, by faith and will that she renounces all here below ; she acknowledges that her nature is not dead :

M.,
8 Jan., 1887

"My heart, I confess, thirsts ardently for happiness," she writes to her eldest sister, "but well do I see that no creature is capable of allaying this thirst. On the contrary, the more I might drink of the waters of that enchanted spring, the more burning would be my thirst. . . .

"I know a fountain where they that drink shall yet thirst,¹ but with a thirst most sweet, a thirst one can always satisfy." And, to indicate this fountain, she returns to her loved refrain: "It is the suffering that is *known to Jesus alone*."

Again we read in her letters:

"May every moment of our life be for *Him alone*,
may creatures touch us only in passing."

C.,
15 Oct., 1889

She said to our Lord:

Every soul on this earth,
If they will, may desert me,
Whilst near Thee I stay,
No desertion can hurt me. . . .

"L'aban-
don,"
p. 420

At her Profession she carried this prayer close to her heart:

"O Jesus, may I never seek nor ever find but *Thee alone*! May all creatures be nothing to me and I nothing to them. . . ."

Ch. viii, p. 13

And this thought grows ever stronger:

"With jealous care must all be kept for Jesus. . . . It is so good to work for Him, and for *Him alone*. . . . How joyous then the heart and how buoyant the spirit! . . ."

A., 1891

She loves often to compare herself to "an obscure little grain of sand."

"*Jesus alone! Naught but Him!* The grain of sand is so tiny that if it willed to open its heart to other than Jesus it would no longer have place for the Beloved. . . ."

A., 1892

In another place she gives us this vivid picture of the retreat in preparation for Profession:

¹ Eccclus. xxiv, 29.

A.,
Sept., 1890

"Before starting, my Fiancé asked me in what land I wished to journey, what road I desired to follow. I answered that I had but one desire—to reach *the summit of the Mount of Love*. Immediately roads without number presented themselves to my gaze; but amongst so many perfect ways I found that, of myself, I was incapable of choosing; then I said to my Divine Guide:

"Thou knowest where I desire to go, Thou knowest for whose sake I want to scale the mountain, Thou knowest Him whom I love and *whom alone I wish to please*. It is *solely for Him* that I undertake this journey; lead me, then, by the path of His choice; provided He be content, I shall have reached the crowning point of happiness."

". . . My Fiancé says nothing to me, nor do I say anything to Him, save that I love Him more than myself; and in the depths of my heart I feel that so it is, for I belong more to Him than to myself. . . .

"I have no consolation on the road by which I am journeying, but Jesus has chosen it, and it is *He, and He alone*, whom I want to please. . . ."

M.,
4 Sept., 1890

"I think that the work of Jesus during this retreat has been to detach me yet more from everything outside Himself."

M.,
7 Sept., 1890

". . . Earthly joys are ended! No other joys can now be mine but those of heaven; that is to say, a profound peace, where all the created, which is nothing, gives place to the increate, which is the reality. . . ."

It is to be noticed that the religious life of the

Servant of God commenced and continued in this same transport which, at so tender an age, had drawn her so powerfully towards sanctity. She had one sole thought—to desire none but Jesus; and the most trifling incidents of life were directed unceasingly to this end.

Thinking of the wild flowers of the mountains and solitary valleys, she “finds them happier than the radiant rose of the garden, because they bloom not for creatures, but for the gaze of the Creator alone.”

C.,
20 Oct., 189

She urges her sister Céline, “the companion of her childhood,” to become “a little drop of dew,” and writes to her :

“Happy little dewdrop, *known to God alone* . . . pause not to consider the courses of the rivers of this world; envy not even the limpid streamlet winding through the meadow; its gentle murmur is indeed sweet, but it can be enjoyed by creatures . . . and the calyx of the divine ‘*Flower of the field*’¹ *could not contain it.* . . .”

C.,
25 April, 189

“O my Jesus,” she exclaims, “Thy name is as oil poured out;² it is in this divine perfume that I wish to be wholly immersed, *far away from the notice of creatures.*”

C.,
6 July, 189

“Cons. et
Souv.”
p. 283

Hearing of the many little attentions prompted by human affection to an earthly spouse, she unfolds her inward thought :

“It shall not be said that a woman in the world will do more for her husband, a mere mortal, than I

Ch. viii, p. 2

¹ Cant. ii, 1.

² Cant. i, 2.

for my divine Spouse. . . . More than ever will I force myself to please, in all my actions, Him who wills to raise me even to a divine alliance with Himself."

She sang to the Spouse of her soul :

"Ce que
j'aimais,"
p. 507

Thy Love alone to seek I'm fain;
My flock I've left upon the plain,
Nor care to keep it; all is vain
Save but to *please the Lamb divine*,
Now mine.

One year, in the enclosure of the monastery, they had pruned too late an alley of chestnut-trees which particularly pleased her; the Servant of God, seeing the verdant branches lie strewn upon the ground, experienced at first very keen regret, but, soon recovering herself, she reflected :

"If I were in another monastery, what difference would it make to me if the chestnut-trees of the Carmel of Lisieux were cut down altogether? I will let transitory things disturb me no more; my Beloved shall hold the place of all else for me. I will wander ever in the groves of His love, which none may touch."

Through all her songs there runs this one note :

"Ce que
j'aimais,"
p. 507

Thou dost suffice me, O Good supreme!
In Thee have I all Earth or Heaven can bring.
The flower that I gather, 'tis Thou,
My King!

Having banished from her heart affection for perishable things, St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus clearly saw the hand of God in everything. Nothing appeared to her to come directly from creatures,

neither joys nor pains; it was always the good God who had permitted whatever happened to her. How, then, could she fail to cordially welcome the various incidents of life?

She wrote :

“ The Almighty has given us a fulcrum—*Himself, Himself alone.*”

Ch. x, p. 2

“ *The hand of Jesus it is that guides everything,*” she never wearied of saying; “ *we ought to see Him only in all things.*”

C.,
21 Oct., 18

In the throes of a bitter disappointment and poignant anxiety of heart concerning her good father attacked in his own person, like the Patriarch Job, she writes, on the eve of her Veiling, to her sister :

“ How tell you what passes within my soul? . . . What a blow ! But I feel that it is struck by a loving hand, by a hand divinely jealous ! . . . Jesus, it is true, had already put many jewels into my casket, but no doubt one of incomparable beauty was wanting, and this precious diamond Jesus has given me to-day. . . . Receiving it, my tears fell . . . they still fall while I write to you ; I can scarce hold the pen. *But it is Jesus who has guided this affair ;* it is He, and I have recognized *His touch of Love.* . . .”

C.,
23 Sept., 18

So she is not insensible, poor “ little Thérèse.” Yet she continues :

“ Your Thérèse knows not how to talk to you except in the language of heaven. It is not a human hand that has done this, *it is Jesus ; His eyes have fallen upon us.* Let us accept with a good heart the thorn that *Jesus presents to us.* . . .”

C.,
23 Sept., 18

In other painful circumstances she had already written :

C. 186
s. 186, 186
"It is the hand of Jesus which adorns His spouse for the bridal day. Oh, I see well that this dear hand makes no mistake as regards ornaments!"

And in the same sense :

C. 186
"Yes, I desire them, these heart-wounds which cause so much pain. I am "a slender reed" planted on the shore of the waters of love and tribulation, but reeds bend without breaking, and how could I get broken, since, whatever happens, I see only the gentle hand of Jesus?"

But Therese, better than grain of sand or slender reed, is a radiant star gleaming with a thousand fires. Here is one, the rays of which mingle with those of humility.

All of good that she practices she attributes to "*her beloved Jesus.*"

If she speaks of her great victory over her sinfulness, at Christmas, 1880—a final victory—she says :

C. 186, 186
"Contenting Himself with my goodwill, Jesus accomplished in an instant the work that I had not been able to do in many years. He made me strong and courageous, and armed me Himself."

C. 186, 186
And, further on, describing her spiritual state :
"Jesus sustains me from moment to moment with a nourishment that is ever new. I find it in me without knowing how it is there. I believe quite simply that it is Jesus Himself, hidden in the depths of my poor little heart, who acts in me in a mysterious

manner, and inspires me with all He wills me to do at the moment."

" . . . From moment to moment He guides and inspires me. Just at the time of need I discover lights till then unknown."

She takes pleasure in repeating :

"It is Jesus who does all, and I—I do nothing."

If she aspires to the conquest of souls, it is on the merits of her Lord alone that she counts :

*Deign unite me to Thee, O Vine sacred and holy,
And this branch, poor and weak, with its fruit shall repay,
And thus can I offer Thee a cluster all golden,
Lord, from to-day!*

And again :

*Ah! well do I know it, our justice all,
In Thy sight divine, has no value apart;
To give worth to my sacrifices small,
I will cast them into Thy Sacred Heart.*

But this worth, this value, how high it is, in her estimation! She dares to write :

"To pick up a pin through love may convert a soul."

Then, as ever, she hastens to add :

"It is *Jesus* who, *alone*, can give such a value to our actions. . . ."

When she expresses her thoughts on fraternal charity, it is with the same most just conviction :

"I feel that when I am charitable it is *Jesus alone who acts in me*. O my Jesus, I know that Thou dost not command anything impossible; Thou knowest better than I my weakness and imperfection; Thou

Ch. viii, p. 1

C.,
6 July, 1892

" Mon chan
d'aujourd'hui
p. 378

" Au Sacré-
Cœur,"
p. 396

L.,
Jan., 1895

Ch. ix,
p. 166-167

knowest that I shall not attain to loving my Sisters as Thou lovest them, *unless Thou Thyself, O my divine Saviour, love them in me.*"

Ch. x, p. 183

"Cons. et
Souv.,"

"When I understood that *it was impossible for me to do anything by myself*," she said, when given charge of the novices, "the task appeared to me simplified. . . . Jesus made me understand that I was not capable of giving consolation to a soul, and that to do good to souls, without the divine assistance, is as impossible a task as to bring back the sun after it has set."

Ch. x, p. 183

She wrote :

C.,
13 Aug., 1893

"All the eloquent discourses of the greatest saints would be incapable of inspiring one act of love without the grace that moves the heart; *it is Jesus only who knows how to make His lyre vibrate.*"

One of the last days of her life, when they thanked her for heaven-sent counsel and example she had given, she answered :

11 July

"It is the good God who is pleased to inspire me with thoughts which do me good and which I communicate to others; the Spirit of God breathes where He will. . . ."

"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 266

"My soul appears to you all bright and golden because it is exposed to Love's rays. If the divine Sun withheld His rays from me I should immediately become obscured and enveloped in darkness."

When praised for her patience, she exclaimed :

18 Aug.

"My patience! But I have not yet had one minute's patience; it is not *my* patience; you are always deceived."

When through inadvertence she falls into some imperfection, see how she prays :

I will hide me, O Jesus, in Thy Sacred Heart,
I tremble not, for *Thou my virtue art!*

"Au Sacré-
Cœur,"
p. 396

"If, through frailty, I fall sometimes, *may Thy divine glance purify my soul immediately*, consuming every imperfection—like to fire which transforms all things into itself."

Offrande,
p. 306

During her illness the Superior of the monastery said to her: "One should not die so young; you have not yet completed your crown."

"O Father," the Servant of God hastened to reply, "it is indeed true I have not completed my crown; *it is Jesus who has done the work for me! . . .*"

9 July

In 1896 she wrote:

"*Jesus wills to give us His heaven gratuitously.*"

M.,
17 Sept., 1896

And, thinking of these words of Holy Scripture—"Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to his works":¹

"He will be much embarrassed as regards me," she remarked, "for I have no works. . . . Well, *He will render to me according to His own works!*"

15 May

"I feel always the same audacious confidence," she had written, "of becoming a great saint. I count not on my merits, having none; but I trust in Him who is Virtue and Holiness itself. *He alone it is who, satisfied with my feeble efforts, will raise me up even unto Himself, and will make me a saint.*"

Ch. iv, p. 55

¹ Apoc. xxii, 12.

Offrande,
p. 306

And, in her Act of Oblation to Love :

“ Lord, at the close of life's day *I shall appear before Thee with empty hands*, for I ask not that Thou wouldst count my works; all our justice is tarnished in Thy sight.¹ *I desire, therefore, to be clothed with Thine own Justice*, and to receive from Thy Love alone the eternal possession of Thyself.”

Then, in the sublime flight of the last pages of her *Histoire*, she exclaims :

Ch. xi, p. 221

“ My folly it is to hope to fly unto Thee *with Thine own wings*, O my divine Eagle !”

¹ Cf. Job xv, 15.

CHAPTER II

The Love of St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus expands in the Practice of all the Virtues

The lover flieth, runneth and rejoiceth; he is free and cannot be restrained. He giveth all for all, and hath all in all. Love complaineth not of impossibility, because it thinketh that it may and can do all things. It can achieve anything; and it doth perform and effect many things, where he that loveth not fainteth and falleth away.

Love watcheth, and sleeping slumbereth not. When weary it is not tired; when straitened it is not constrained; when frightened it is not disturbed; but like a vivid flame and a burning torch it mounteth upwards and securely passeth through all.—“Imit.” III, v, 4-5.

ARTICLE I

A Closer Study of Some Virtues of St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus

SECTION I

Virtue of Religion

THE love of St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus for God found its first and very natural expression in the tender respect she showed towards the Sacraments and everything relating to divine worship.

Like the Psalmist, she could say :

“ Lord, I have been delighted in the way of Thy testimonies. . . . Thy justifications were the subject of my song in the place of my pilgrimage.”¹

Animated by a profound piety, from earliest childhood Thérèse applied herself earnestly to obtain enlightenment by the study of the Catechism. In the course of religious instruction the chaplain of the convent school distinguished her amongst all her companions by the title of “ little doctor.”

Ch. iv, p. 63

Her great ambition was to keep unsullied the white robe of *her Baptism*, “ wishing to be ever faithful to the promises that her godmother—her eldest sister, Marie—had made for her at the holy font.”

Souv. inédits

I “ shall strive in heaven,” she declared, “ to procure for little children the grace of Baptism ; it grieves me so to know that such numbers, through being deprived of this, will never see God.”

Id.

¹ Ps. cxviii, 14, 54.

happier than in seeing my rose petals touch the sacred monstrance."

Ch. iv, p. 59

Then came the still happier feast of her *first Holy Communion*, concerning which the thoughts of her heart have been unveiled to us. The angelic child calls it "a Kiss of Love. . . ." "*I love Thee*," she says to Jesus, "and I give myself to Thee for ever!" She adds:

"Already for a long time past He and the little Thérèse had watched and understood one another. . . . That day our meeting was no longer a simple look, but a *fusion*. No longer were we two: Thérèse had disappeared as the drop of water which loses itself in the depths of the ocean. . . . Jesus alone remained; He was the Master, the King!"

Id. p. 61

After this visit from her Lord, she "longed for nothing more than to receive Him." Later on she will say:

Ch. v, p. 80

"It is not to remain in a golden ciborium that Jesus comes down each day from heaven, but to find another heaven—the heaven of our soul, in which He takes His delight."

M. G., 1888¹

She will put scrupulous souls on their guard against the artifice of the demon who "seeks to

¹ This letter concerning the doctrine of the Eucharist, so certain in itself but so overlooked at the time, was later to evoke the admiration of His Holiness Pius X. "*Opportunissimo! Opportunissimo!*" he exclaimed, on reading the opening lines; then, addressing Monsigneur de Teil, Vice-Postulator of the Cause of our Saint: "This is a great joy to me . . . *gaudio magno*. . . . We must use all *speed* in dealing with this Process." Later on, the venerated Pontiff did not hesitate to say, indicating a picture of the Servant of God: "*Behold the greatest saint of modern times!*"

deprive Jesus of a loved tabernacle, well knowing that he will then have won the victory over this poor heart, empty without its Lord."

"It is necessary that the Bread of Angels come like a divine dew to strengthen you and to give all that is wanting to you," she will write to an over-diffident novice.

"Cons. et
Souv."
p. 294

She longed for daily Communion, and prayed fervently — this is most remarkable — that Holy Church might return to the ancient practice, then fallen into abeyance, of allowing the faithful to partake of the Eucharistic banquet every day.

Souv. inédits

During her last illness she was seen with heroic courage to take advantage of the days of Communion. She would drag herself along to the chapel at the cost of such painful exhaustion as drew tears from the eyes of those who knew her secret suffering. Then what a trial followed later, when hæmoptysis and persistent suffocations constrained her to forgo the visits of her God during the five last weeks of her life. . . .

But did Jesus, who "fulfilled all the desires of Thérèse," deprive Himself of "so loved a tabernacle"? Rather, did He not inhabit it in a mysterious manner, thus granting this audacious request of His beloved?

Ch. viii,
p. 141

"I cannot receive Holy Communion as often as I would, but, Lord, art Thou not almighty? Remain in me as in the Tabernacle, and never leave Thy little victim. . . ."

Offrande,
p. 306

Nevertheless, the privation of sacramental Communion was for her a real martyrdom, and on her

death-bed she promised to ask of God, as soon as she reached heaven, the privilege of daily Communion for the community, which was granted without delay. Would it, then, be rash to think that her intercession, made on behalf of the entire Church, contributed towards obtaining the blessed decrees of Pius X on the frequent and early reception of this divine Sacrament?

Souv. inédits

This love of the Blessed Eucharist made her appreciate in a quite special way the sublime character of the Priesthood; all her life she experienced a certain regret at seeing herself forcibly excluded from this holy service. It was with this thought in her mind that she naïvely confessed herself "glad to die at twenty-four, because before this age one is not generally ordained priest. The good God, then, in taking me to Himself, spares me the sorrow of having lived without being one, or that of living without hope of ever becoming one."

Souv. inédits

She was delighted at having read that St Barbara carried the Blessed Eucharist to St Stanislas Kostka. "Why not an angel," she said, "or a priest, but a simple maiden? . . . Ah, what marvels we shall see in heaven! I imagine that those who shall have desired it upon earth shall in heaven enjoy the privileges of the priesthood."

Ch. viii, p. 140

She had been truly happy to be sacristan, and therefore "to be able to touch the sacred vessels and prepare the linen cloths destined to receive Jesus."

Her veneration for holy things was universal and touching; it bore testimony to her profound faith in

the great virtue attached to objects that have received the Church's blessing.

"Light the blessed candle," she said during her last illness; "its presence comforts me; I feel that it drives away the demon." 26 Aug.

The same supernatural reverence led her to seek the counsel of God's priests. Her Act of Oblation as Victim to Merciful Love had no value for her until revised by a theologian.

The Servant of God showed herself inflexible on the point of *obedience to ecclesiastical authority*. To cite but one example:

She had greatly relished a certain work, but, learning afterwards that the author failed in respect and submission to a bishop, she put aside his works and wished never to hear them spoken of again.

Nor was she less strict concerning obedience to her *Rule and to her Superiors*. We read in one of her poems:

The angel that dwelt midst ineffable light,
In his pride said: "I will not obey! . . ."
For my part, I choose during earth's dark night,
Obedience in all, as my way.
A holy daring is born in me
Hell's fury to brave on life's battle-field:
Obedience my breastplate strong shall be,
And of my heart the shield.

"Mes Armes,
p. 415

O Conquering God! be no glory mine
Save to submit all my will to Thee;
The obedient of victories shall speak
Throughout eternity!

"When one ceases to consult the sure compass of obedience," she taught, "the soul forthwith loses her way in arid paths where the waters of grace soon fail her." Ch. ix, p. 164

How did St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus receive the *Sacrament of Confirmation*? She herself tells us :

Ch. iv, p. 62

“ With the greatest care I prepared for the coming of the Holy Spirit. I could not understand why more careful attention is not bestowed on the preparation for this Sacrament of Love. . . . How happy I was ! Like the Apostles, I awaited with gladness the coming of the promised Comforter. I rejoiced to think that I should soon be a perfect Christian, and have eternally graven upon my forehead the mysterious Cross of this ineffable Sacrament.”

Souv. inédits

In the course of her preparatory retreat she was, one day, explaining to her youngest sister how the Holy Ghost takes possession of the soul in Confirmation. Her language was so sublime, and her countenance assumed suddenly so rapt an expression, that, unable to bear it, Céline lowered her eyes, and went away penetrated by a supernatural impression that she has never forgotten.

Id.

At the point of death, we again find the same fire of the divine Spirit, when she prepares to receive *the Sacrament of Extreme Unction*. She was noticed afterwards regarding with joy and respect her hands purified by the holy unction and prayers of the Church.

The Church of God, how she loved it ! It was the Mother of her soul, and again and again she would repeat with noble pride this word of St Teresa of Avila : “ I am a daughter of the Church ! ”

She sang to her Saviour :

“ Vivre
d'Amour,”
p. 381

Protect, O Lord, Thine immortal Church,
Each moment, to her Thy protection prove.
Her child, for her I immolate myself. . . .
My life is love !

Again, she had desired "to die on a field of battle in defence of the Church."

Ch. xi, p. 21

From this love for the Church came her *filial veneration for its Supreme Head*—he whom the faithful, in filial reverence, so eloquently name "the Holy Father." Relating the incidents of her sojourn in the Eternal City, she manifests thus the ardour of her admiration for the Vicar of Jesus Christ:

"Six days were spent in admiring the principal wonders of Rome, and on the seventh I saw the greatest of all, the Pope."

Ch. vi, p. 10

Then, recalling to mind the beauties of Switzerland and of Italy which had charmed her, she finishes by singing:

But most I loved the penetrating gaze
The holy, aged Pontiff-King
Bent on me.

"Ce que
j'aimais,"
p. 504

And, in fine, on the eve of her Profession, how keen was her joy in receiving the "dearly prized benediction" of the Sovereign Pontiff, a benediction which, according to her testimony, helped her to triumph over a terrible interior trial which this decisive hour had in store for her.

Ch. viii. p. 13

Profound, too, was *her confidence in prayer*.

All her life she esteemed it a great honour to chant the Divine Office, and gloried in it when her turn came to recite alone and aloud, like the priest, mediator between God and man, the prayer from the Breviary.

Souv. inédits

During her illness she wished to be sustained by the prayers of those around her. She writes also to one of her spiritual brothers:

"Oh, I beseech you, pray much for me; prayers are so necessary for me at this moment!"

F.,
13 July, 1897

She insists upon the need of patience and of strength felt by the dying.

3 Aug.

"Pray for the poor dying ones," she urged her infirmarian; "if you only knew how easy it is for them to lose patience! . . ."

23 Aug.

"Oh, pray for me to the Blessed Virgin; I would pray so much for you if you were ill."

Another day she said:

"Cons. et
Souv."
p. 270

"You well know it is God's will that in this world souls, by means of prayer, should communicate heaven's gifts one to another."

And again:

Id.

"How often have I thought that I owe, perhaps, all the graces showered upon me to the prayers of a little soul whom I shall know only in heaven."

Elsewhere she will set forth the innumerable benefits that she saw in the dogma of the "*Communion of Saints*."

Ch. vi, p. 96

But here we may recall briefly *her devotion to her guardian Angel*, to whom she dedicates one of her hymns. To *St Joseph*, "her love of whom, since childhood, mingled in her heart with her love for the Blessed Virgin." *To the whole court of heaven, the Angels and Saints*, whom she considered as "her parents," since she had begged them "to adopt her as their child." And, above all, *her filial affection for Mary*, whose unfailing power she recognized thus:

Ch. x, p. 217

Souv. inédits

"When we address ourselves to the Saints we must wait a little while; we feel that they must go and present their petition. But when we ask a

favour of the Blessed Virgin, we receive immediate help. . . . Have you not noticed that? Try it, and you will see!"

In tender accents she sang to her:

During this sad exile, O my cherished Mother!
With thee I fain would live, would each day follow thee;
Contemplating thee, my soul is wholly ravished,
Discovering in thy heart what depths of love there be. . . .

"Pourquoi
t'aime,
p. 430"

SECTION II

Love of our Neighbour

The charity of our Saint towards her neighbour stands out as one of the most striking characteristics of her love for God.

"I made it my study above all else to love the good God," she tells us, "and, in loving Him, to understand in its full extent the great duty of charity."

Ch. ix, p. 1

This charity assumed, in her, numberless forms.

"*Love one another*, for this is the precept of the Lord,"¹ St John the Apostle ceased not to repeat. And, because it was *the precept of the Lord*, His little servant wished to fathom its depths and to put it in practice with the same refinement of love that she showed towards her God.

The *new commandment* of Jesus to His disciples "*to love one another as He had loved them*"² furnished an admirable theme which she developed in chapters ix and x of her *Histoire*, where she declares

¹ Cf. 2 John 5.

² John xv, 12.

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¹ Cf. 2 John 5.

² John xv, 12.

Ch. ix, p. 167

that "the more she is united to Jesus, the more does she love all her Sisters."

Here are a few extracts from her code of fraternal charity :

Id.

"If, when I desire to increase in my heart love of my neighbour, the demon tries to set before my eyes the faults of one or other of the Sisters, I hasten to call to mind her virtues, her good desires; I say to myself that, if I have seen her fall once, she may well have won many victories which she conceals through humility; and that even what appears to me a fault may in truth be an act of virtue by reason of the intention."

Id., p. 166

"I understand now that true charity consists in bearing with all the defects of our neighbour, in not being surprised at his failings, and in being edified by his least virtues; but above all I have learnt that charity must not remain shut up in the depths of our heart, for 'neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are in the house.'"¹

Ch. x, p. 192

From this she concludes that "her charity ought to shine as a light, *gladdening* those around her," and she sings :

"Ma Paix et
ma Joie,"
p. 413

My peace is, to hide from my Sisters,
The tears shed in sorrowful hours;
Ah, truly hath suffering charms,
When we know how to veil it with flowers.

"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 275

Consequently, the Servant of God teaches the novices not to go to the recreations of the community with only the intention of finding pleasure and re-

¹ Matt. v, 15; cf. Luke vi, 33.

laxation; she wants in them the disposition to practise charity therein, and to seek *to please the others* rather than themselves.

Her love of her neighbour, as well as her love for God, reached the point of absolute disinterestedness, and prompted her to follow to the letter the counsels of our blessed Lord in the Gospel: "Give to every one that asketh of thee, and of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again."¹ "And if a man will contend with thee in judgement, and take away thy coat, let go thy cloak also unto him."²

"To yield up our cloak," she explains, "means to renounce our last rights and to consider ourselves as the servant, the slave of others."

Ch. ix, p. 170

Wishing to push still further the delicacy of her charity, she continues:

"It is not enough that I should give to whosoever may ask of me; I must forestall their desires, and show that I feel much gratified, much honoured, in rendering service; and if they take a thing that I use, I must seem as though glad to be *relieved* of it."

Id.

In circumstances, however, when we cannot comply with the requests of others she counsels "so gracious a manner of refusing, that the refusal may please as much as the gift."

Id.

Moreover, she makes no mistake as to the practical consequences of her affability. She knows that "there is less hesitation in seeking assistance from those who show themselves always disposed to

Id.

¹ Luke vi, 30.

² Matt. v, 40.

oblige"; but as the Gospel is her rule of conduct, she declares:

"I ought not to avoid those Sisters who freely ask services, since the divine Master said: 'From him that would borrow of thee turn not away.'"¹

In fine, she carefully sets aside all human calculations:

Ch. ix, p. 170

"I must not be obliging in order to appear so, or in the hope that the Sister whom I oblige will in her turn render me service, for, again, our Lord has said: 'If you lend to them of whom you hope to receive, what thanks are to you? For sinners also lend to sinners for to receive as much. But do good, and lend, hoping for nothing thereby, and your reward shall be great.'"²

Ch. x, p. 178

It is in this spirit that she yields all to her neighbour, "even her most profound and personal thoughts, the lights of her intelligence, the ardour of her heart, those precious possessions which each one treasures as his very own, and which no one, in his opinion, has the right to touch."

Id.

She declares that she has "received the grace of being no more attached to the goods of mind and heart than to those of earth."

Ch. ix, p. 172-173

Thérèse, as we know, succeeded in conquering a natural antipathy to such an extent that the Sister who was the object of it believed herself to be her greatest friend. She obtained a certain charge in the convent, which placed her under a Sister whose un-

¹ Matt. v, 42.

² Luke vi, 34, 35.

fortunate disposition must infallibly have given Thérèse much to suffer. It was with tender charity that she voluntarily made herself the support of a poor paralytic Sister whom it was almost impossible to please; and she sought to animate the zeal of a novice employed in the infirmary, saying to her :

Ch. x, p. 19.

“ Oh, how happy should I have been had this office been entrusted to me. I well know that it requires much abnegation, but it seems to me that I would have discharged its duties with tender love, thinking always of our Blessed Lord saying : ‘ I was sick, and you comforted Me.’ ”¹

“ Cons. et
Souv. ”
p. 285

And, to encourage the novice :

“ Now you carry little cups to right and left, but soon Jesus will take His turn; He will go and come, and, ‘ passing, will minister unto you.’ ”² He Himself has said so.”

Souv. inédits

When she observed in her young companions a tendency to introspection, she would combat it by arousing their zeal.

“ To let our thoughts dwell upon self,” she would say, “ renders the soul sterile; we must quickly turn to labours of love.”

Id.

Here is a detail, trifling indeed, but original, and not lacking beauty if we consider the intention :

Ill in the infirmary, she would spare the flies that tormented her, “ because,” said she, “ I have no other enemies, and as the good God has bidden us *forgive our enemies*, I am pleased to find this little

30 July

¹ Cf. Matt. xxv, 36.

² Luke xii, 37.

opportunity of doing so: that is why I always pardon them."

But we can do no more than just touch upon a subject so fruitful in acts of virtue for the Saint, which, for the most part, must remain God's secret.

She deemed corporal penance a small matter when weighed in the balance with Charity, and, commenting on it, quoted this passage from the prophet Isaïas: "Is this such a fast as I have chosen: for a man to afflict his soul for a day? . . . and spread sackcloth and ashes? Wilt thou call this a fast, and a day acceptable to the Lord? Is not *this* rather the fast that I have chosen? *Loose the bands of wickedness, undo the bundles that oppress, let them that are broken go free, and break asunder every burden.*"¹

Ch. ix, p. 174

"Remembering that 'Charity covereth a multitude of sins,'² I draw from the teeming mine opened to us by our blessed Lord in his holy Gospel. I search the hidden meaning of His adorable words, and exclaim with David: 'I have run in the way of Thy commandments since Thou didst enlarge my heart.'³ And Charity alone can enlarge my heart. . . . O Jesus! since this sweet flame consumes it, I run with delight in the way of Thy *new commandment*, and therein will I run until the blessed day when, with Thy Virgin train, I shall follow Thee through Thy boundless realms, singing Thy *New Canticle*, which must surely be the Canticle of *Love*."

¹ Isa. lviii, 5, 6.

² Cf. Prov. x, 12; 1 Pet. iv, 8.

³ Ps. cxviii, 32.

But it is chiefly towards souls that St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus delights in practising Charity.

In order to stimulate a novice to be generous, she feigned need of being herself aroused to zeal.

"I am obliged to have 'a chaplet' for counting my acts of virtue," she confides to her sister Céline, still in the world, "and this through charity towards one of my companions; to encourage her I have allowed myself to be caught in nets little to my liking, I assure you."

C.,
23 July, 1893

She endeavours to make her novices habitually charitable in thought:

"When you are tempted, even to anger, against someone, the way to regain peace is to pray for that person, and to beg the good God to reward her for making you suffer."

Souv. inédits

She added that, in order not to fall, it was necessary to "soften the heart beforehand."

Id.

She also liked to recall these words of the *Imitation*: "It is more profitable to leave to each one his own way of thinking, than to stay and contend with him."¹ "Our desire to persuade our Sisters that they are in the wrong, even when this is perfectly true, is hardly fair, as we are not responsible for their guidance. We must not be *justices of the peace*, but only *angels of peace*."

"Cons. et
Souv.,
p. 283

That was why, when she saw a Sister forget herself and commit a fault, "she hastened to excuse the culprit and to accredit her with good intentions."

Ch. x, p. 191

Noticing, during her illness, the care taken by the

¹ "Imit." III, xliv, 1.

infirmarian to select for her use the softest linen, she draws therefrom this conclusion :

Souv. inédits

“ With similar care ought we treat souls that are suffering . . . even those most imperfect. Often, indeed, without reflecting, we wound them by inattention, want of consideration, thoughtless ways of acting, while at the same time they need to be looked after and comforted to the utmost of our power.”

Ch. x, p. 191

“ Yes, I feel that I ought to be *as compassionate concerning the spiritual infirmities* of my Sisters as others are in regard to my physical infirmities.”

“ Cons. et
Souv.”
p. 299

She strives, therefore, to lighten all sadness, and when her efforts are unavailing she begs of the good God to comfort the afflicted soul.

Thérèse's love for souls finds its chief expression in her *zeal for their salvation* :

Ch. iv, p. 67

“ What compassion I have for souls who are going astray !” she exclaims. “ It is so easy to lose one's way in the flower-strewn paths of the world !”

Ch. v, p. 76

She wished “ *at all costs* to wrest sinners from the eternal flames.”

Id.

To accomplish that she “ resolved to remain in spirit continually at the foot of the Cross, there to receive the divine Dew of salvation, and to outpour it upon souls.”

Id., p. 76-77

From the age of fourteen she regarded as her first conquest the conversion of an assassin, because to obtain it she had prayed and imposed on herself many sacrifices.

It was this desire for the salvation of souls that made her come to the Carmel. At the canonical

examination which preceded her Profession, she declared :

“ I have come here *to save souls* and to pray for priests.” Ch. viii, p. 118

And she sings :

For sinners, Lord, my prayer will ever be ;
To Carmel have I come
To fill Thy Heaven, Thy home,
Remember Thou !

“ Rappelle-
toi,” p. 390

At another time she writes :

“ *I have not chosen an austere life to expiate my own faults, but those of others.*” F.,
21 June, 1897

“ For,” she said, “ had I been rich I never could have borne to see a poor person hungry without giving him of my goods. In the same way, according as I gain some spiritual treasure, feeling that there are at that very instant souls on the point of being lost and falling into hell, I give them all that I possess. Never yet have I found the moment to say : ‘ Now I am going to work for myself. ’ ” 14 July

Alluding to her girlish enthusiasm for “ Joan of Arc, the warrior maid,” she writes to one of her spiritual brothers :

“ . . . Instead of the Voice from heaven, inviting me to combat, I heard in the depths of my heart a voice sweeter and stronger still—that of the Spouse of virgins, calling me to nobler deeds, to more glorious conquests, and in the solitude of Carmel I understood that *my mission was to make the King of Heaven loved, and to bring souls more completely beneath His divine rule.*” F.,
25 April, 1897

And for this holy campaign her armour will ever be the same—Love!

" Prière,"
p. 310

" *My sword is love; with it I shall chase the stranger from the kingdom, I shall have Jesus proclaimed King in the souls of men.*"

All her trials are offered for souls. In her temptation against faith, how edifying her words!

Ch. ix, p. 158

" Lord, Thy child has understood Thy divine light; she asks pardon of Thee for her unbelieving brethren; she consents to eat of the bread of sorrow for as long a time as Thou dost will it. For love of Thee does she sit at this table filled with bitterness, where poor sinners take their nourishment, and from which she has no wish to rise before receiving a sign from Thy divine hand.

Id. p. 159

" O my God, if it be needful that the table sullied by them be purified by a soul that loves Thee, I am willing to eat there the bread of tears until it please Thee to introduce me into Thy realms of light."

C., 1889

" Jesus desires that the salvation of souls should be achieved by our sacrifices and our love," she writes. " Let us offer our sufferings to Jesus to save them. Let us live for them, let us be apostles!"

The Saint led her novices by this way, schooling them to generosity. One day a young Sister was walking in very leisurely fashion to the laundry, where she was to work. Thérèse, with joyful animation, said to her:

" Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 279

" Is that how one hastens who has children to

nourish, and who is obliged to work for their living?"

This thought of the salvation of souls will remain uppermost in her soul even to the very threshold of eternity, and will inspire her to make this touching compact:

"I ask of the good God that all the prayers offered for me may serve, not to lighten my sufferings, but to obtain the salvation of sinners."

22 Aug.

She had sung to her Beloved:

Remember Thou the loving plaint
That on the Cross broke from Thy Heart;
Jesus, 'tis graven in mine own,
Thine ardent thirst it shares in part;
The more wounded by Thy divine fire it be
The more *doth it thirst to give souls to Thee.*
That I burn night and day
With this loving thirst alway,
Remember Thou!

"Rappelle-
toi," p. 392

The *sanctification of priests* held first place in her apostolic zeal:

"During the short moments that remain to us," she writes to her sister, "let us not lose our time; let us save souls! I feel that Jesus asks us to quench His thirst by giving Him souls, souls of priests above all. . . . Yes, let us pray for priests; may our life be consecrated to this object. . . . These souls should be clearer than crystal; but alas! I know that there are ministers of the Lord who are not that which they ought to be. Then, let us pray and suffer for them. . . . Enter thou also into this desire of my heart."

C.,
24 July, 1888
15 Oct., 1889
14 Oct., 1890

The Servant of God was but sixteen years of age

when she wrote those lines. Later, when writing her *Life*, she returns to this subject which she has so much at heart :

Ch. vi, p. 95 .

"How beautiful is our vocation ! It is for us to *preserve the salt of the earth*. We offer our prayers and sacrifices for the apostles of the Lord ; *we ought ourselves to be their apostles*, while they by word and example preach the Gospel to our brethren."

"Vivre
d'Amour,"
p. 381

To live Love's life—dear Master, 'tis to pray
Thou keep aflame Thy sacred fire in him,
Thy Priest anointed, holy and elect ;
That pure he be as Thine own Seraphim !

Lastly, her charity was not forgetful of the souls in purgatory, who benefited by her "Heroic Act" and numerous indulgences gained for them.

When the malady had become very acute and she was forbidden, on account of the increasing oppression, to recite vocal prayers, she asked as a grace that she might be able at least to continue the six *Paters* and *Aves*, so as to procure for the souls departed all the privileges attached to this devotion.

Nevertheless, her strongest attraction was towards *acts* of fraternal devotedness, and she loved to repeat that "the principal plenary indulgence is one which may be gained by all without the ordinary conditions ; it is the indulgence of *the charity that covereth a multitude of sins*."¹

"Cons. et
Souv."
p. 288

¹ Prov. x, 12.

SECTION III

Prudence—her Wisdom in Counsels

"Love is prudent, it is strong, prompt, vigilant, and circumspect,"¹ the author of the *Imitation* tells us. Our Saint made all these characteristics of Love shine forth in her actions.

She expresses her admiration for the prudence of the Blessed Virgin in not revealing to St Joseph the mystery of the Incarnation:

Suffering him to weep, the tabernacle nigh
Which veileth the Saviour's beauty divine.

"Pourquoi je
t'aime,"
p. 427

She gives praise to her Mother in heaven for what she calls "her eloquent silence," and exclaims:

To me, 'tis a concert sweet and melodious,
Which tells of the grandeur, the power almighty
Of a soul that seeks succour from Heaven alone. . . .

Id.

She was by grace attracted like Mary "to keep many things in her heart."

"It does so much good and gives so much strength not to speak of our troubles," she said. 5 Aug.

"When we are misunderstood and unfavourably judged, what is the good of explaining and defending ourselves? Let us say nothing—just let it pass; it is so sweet to allow ourselves to be judged, no matter how. O happy silence which gives so great a peace to the soul!" 6 April

"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 282

However, with one who less appreciates the blessed fruits of this silence, she agrees that it is meritorious and difficult on certain occasions: "because suffering is usually more painful to nature when we know it is unknown."

20 Aug.

¹ Cf. "Imit." III, v, 5, 7.

Souv. inédits

She smiled when she saw the novices lay claim to imaginary rights.

One of them once boasted of having succeeded in getting an idea of hers adopted:

"Ah," exclaimed Thérèse, "so boasting is your rôle! . . . Well, for my part, I shall take good care not to follow you. I like better to repeat with Jesus 'I seek not My glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.'"¹

Ch. xi, p. 217

But if the Servant of God "sought not her glory, she sought, in her prudence, to make love yield as much fruit as she could dare to expect. "Child of the light," she wished to be wiser in her affairs than are the children of darkness in theirs. We read in her letters:

C., 1893

"Jesus teaches me 'to draw profit from all things good and bad, that He finds in me.'² He teaches me to play at the bank of Love. . . ."

Witness an example of her "play":

L.,
12 July, 1896

"It seems to me," she says, "that if our sacrifice take Jesus captive, *our joys also enchain Him*. For this, we must not concentrate our thoughts on selfish happiness, but offer to our divine Spouse *the little joys* that He strews on the pathway of life, to delight our hearts and lift them up even unto Himself."

Ch. viii, p. 136

In truth she loved the good God too much and knew Him too well to believe that our love is pleasing to Him only when united with suffering. She knew Him to be "more tender than a mother" and glad to see us smile. Therefore with the same happiness

¹ John viii, 50.

² St John of the Cross.

did she offer to Him her joys and her sorrows. We read in her writings :

“ I wish to suffer through love, and through love even to rejoice.” Ch. xi, p. 218

My griefs, *my joys*, my sacrifices small—
Behold my flowers! . . .

“ Jeter des
Fleurs,”
p. 403

And in another poem :

My *joy*, my sorrows all, I offer in exchange
For children’s souls.

“ Aux SS.
Innocents,”
p. 437

Again :

That all my *joy* and tears
Are for Thy harvesters,
Remember Thou!

“ Rappelle-
toi,” p. 390

And to the Blessed Virgin :

Thy dear maternal gaze doth banish all my fears :
It teaches me to weep, *it teaches to rejoice*. . . .

“ Pourquoi
je t’aime,”
p. 428

In the following examples we discover prudence of another kind :

When distracted during her prayers and thanksgivings, when certain persons unseasonably occupy her, they benefit by it, because the Saint immediately takes the opportunity to recommend them to God. She goes so far as to say, when the distractions are more troublesome :

“ Cons. et
Souv.,”
p. 287

“ I accept all for love of the good God, even the most extravagant thoughts that come into my mind.” 4 June

How will she act now in face of an evident imperfection?

“ When I commit a fault which saddens me,” she says, “ I well know that this sadness is the consequence of my infidelity, but ‘ I am prudent in my

3 July

affairs . . . ' and I hasten to say to the good God :
' My God, I know I have deserved this feeling of
sadness; nevertheless, *allow me to look upon it as a
trial which Thou in Thy love dost send me. I regret
my sin; but I am glad to have this little suffering to
offer to Thee.*' "

And in a comparison already quoted, thinking of
her misery which has been able to cause the eclipse
of her divine Sun, she says :

Ch. xi, p. 220

" If Thou dost remain deaf to the plaintive lamen-
tations of Thy disconsolate creature, if Thou dost
remain veiled—well, then I consent to be benumbed
with cold, and *I rejoice in this suffering, howsoever
merited.*"

She had written :

A.,
Jan., 1889

" All shall be for Him, all ! And when I shall
have nothing to offer Him *I will give Him that
nothing.* . . . "

Ch. xi, p. 220

Id., p. 217

But there is one thought which dominates her in
her helplessness—that of making heaven take pity on
her, of obtaining there as many intercessors as there
are angels and saints, of gaining for herself friends
who will, " during her exile, protect and defend her
against the demons," and later " receive her into the
everlasting dwellings."¹ Nor is this all; she longs
to make herself so cherished by them that they will
obtain for her the grace to love the good God more
than they themselves love Him—" their love twice-
told," as she happily expresses it.

Listen to her prayer :

¹ Luke xvi, 9.

“ I presented myself before the Angels and the assembly of the Saints, and said to them : ‘ I am the least of creatures ; I know my misery, but I also know that noble and generous hearts greatly love to do good. I therefore beseech you, blessed inhabitants of Heaven, *to adopt me as your child*; to you alone will redound the glory that you will help me to win. Deign to hear my prayer. I implore you to obtain for me *your love twice-told*. ’ ”

Ch. xi, p. 21

She had eagerly copied these lines of the celebrated Tauler, which so well corresponds to her own idea of the communion of saints :

Souv. inédits

“ If I love the good which is in my neighbour more than he himself loves it, this good is more mine than his. If I love in St Paul all the favours that God has bestowed on him, all, by the same title, belong to me. By this communion I can be enriched by all the good that is in heaven and upon earth, in the angels and saints, and in all who love God.”¹

Her instructions to the novices, and the counsels that she humbly gives to the nuns who ask them of her, are all marked with the stamp of the most intelligent prudence. One notices therein an extraordinary gift of discernment which, in order to attain the invariable end in view, knows how to adopt the most diverse means according to the different characters and varying situations.

See first, on the subject of direction of souls, what she thinks and practises with purity of intention,

¹ Tauler (Sermon for 5th Sunday after Feast of the Blessed Trinity).

perfect renunciation of herself, and persevering energy :

Ch. x, p. 184

"In everything," she says, "I must find self-denial and sacrifice. Thus I feel that a letter will not bear fruit unless I write it with a certain reluctance, and solely through obedience. When conversing with a novice, I am careful to mortify myself and to avoid asking her questions which would gratify my curiosity. If she commence to speak of something interesting, then, leaving it unfinished, pass to a subject wearisome to me, I take care not to remind her of the interruption, for it seems to me that one can do no good by self-seeking."

And again :

"Cons. et
Souv."
p. 298

"That a reprimand may be fruitful, it must cost in the giving; and it must be given without a movement of passion in the heart."

Ch. x, p. 186

When she feels that what she says is not understood, she "turns interiorly to the Blessed Virgin, and Jesus is always triumphant. Her whole strength lies in prayer and sacrifice. She knows by experience that these, her invincible arms, can, far better than words, move hearts."

This humble recourse to the inspirations that come from God obtained for her, as we have said, great circumspection in the direction of souls.

Id. p. 181

Since "there are souls for whom God's mercy wearies not of waiting, and to whom He gives His light only by degrees, she is on her guard lest she might seek to forestall His hour."

Id., p. 185

"I have seen," she remarks, "that all souls have nearly the same combats, and, on the other hand, so

extreme is the difference between them that it is not expedient to lead all by the same path."

"It is absolutely necessary to forget our own views, our personal notions, and to guide souls, not by our own way—the way we ourselves go—but by the particular way that Jesus wishes to lead them." Ch. x, p. 183

Our Saint was scarce sixteen when one of her companions of the novitiate, eight years older, obtained permission to converse with her frequently. But, soon perceiving that these conversations "did not attain the end desired"—namely, religious perfection—Thérèse followed an inspiration to "speak out plainly all her thought, or else put an end to these meetings which too much resembled those of friends in the world." Id., p. 181

Again she declares :

"The good God has given me this grace not to fear the fight; at any price I must do my duty. But what costs me most of all is to observe the faults, the lightest imperfections in others, and wage war on them to the death. I would far rather receive a thousand reproaches myself than address to another a single one." Id., p. 185
Id., p. 184

"In the direction of souls we must never let things pass for the sake of leaving ourselves in repose; let us fight unceasingly, even without hope of gaining the victory. What matter about success? If we have to do with an untractable soul, let us not say: 'Nothing can be done! . . . She does not understand. . . . I can make nothing of her . . . must give it up.' To 6 April

“speak thus is cowardly; we must do our duty unto the very end.”

The considerateness and the charity of Thérèse towards the souls whom she guided, far from implying any laxity, was allied, as may be seen, to an unwonted firmness.

18 April
“Cons. et
Souv.,”
p. 298

“We must not,” she said, “let kindness degenerate into weakness. When we have blamed justly, we ought to leave it so, and not yield to feelings of distress at having given pain and caused tears. To run after the aggrieved one and console her is to do more harm than good. To leave her to herself is to force her to expect nothing from creatures, to have recourse to the good God, to see her failings, and to humble herself. Otherwise she would grow accustomed to being consoled after a deserved rebuke, and would behave as does a spoilt child, who stamps and cries, well knowing that this will bring its mother back to wipe away the tears.”

After a long discussion with a novice who had difficulty in recognizing her failings:

“I have fought hard,” said Thérèse, “and am indeed tired, but I do not fear the combat; I am as much in peace there as at prayer. It is the Will of the good God that I should fight even unto death.”

“With the souls whom we direct we must be straightforward and say what we think; this is what I have always done; if I am not liked, that matters little; besides, I do not seek it. Let no one come to me who does not wish to know the entire truth.”

She sought especially to safeguard souls from every kind of delusion.

She warned Rev. Mother Agnès de Jésus that after her death many young priests, learning that she had been given as spiritual sister to two missionaries, would ask the same favour. This might, she said, become a danger.

“Any one of us, I am certain, who should write what I write, would receive the same praises and the same confidences. But it is solely by prayer and sacrifice that we can be of use to the Church. Correspondence ought to be very rare, and should not be allowed at all to certain nuns who would be pre-occupied about it, believing they would accomplish great things, while in reality they do nothing but harm their own souls and perhaps fall into the subtle snares of Satan.” 8 July

And insisting still further :

“Mother, what I have just said to you is very important; I beg of you not to forget it later on. In Carmel we must not mint counterfeit coin to purchase souls. . . . And often the fine words that are written and the fine words received in reply are but an exchange of counterfeit coin. . . .”

The Saint was not at all dazzled by the confidence placed in her and never prided herself on it.

To a young Sister who considered her specially privileged in that God entrusted her with the care of other souls, she replied :

“That does not add anything to me; I am in truth only just what I am in God’s sight. . . . It

“Cons. et
Souv.”
p. 269

does not follow that He loves me more because He wills that I should be His interpreter to you; rather, He makes me your little servant. It is for your sake, and not for mine, that He has given those charms and virtues which you think you discern in me."

Souv. inédits

"The most privileged are those whom the good God keeps for Himself alone. As to the souls whom He puts forward in relief, it needs a miracle of His grace to preserve them in all their freshness."

11 Sept.
"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 269

"Oh, how poisonous the praises offered day by day to those who hold high places. What baneful incense! How necessary it is that the soul be detached from self, so as to escape unharmed."

Again, she said:

20 July

"The good God makes whomsoever He wills His representative. It matters not upon whom that choice falls."

Ch. ix, p. 155

"Yes, I know it; I have understood. He has need of no one, still less of me than of others, to do good upon earth."

This conviction made her add, with entire detachment:

Id., p. 152

"If my manuscript were burnt before my eyes without even being read, that would not cause me the slightest pain."

She avoids eagerness in affairs, yet she is always occupied, remarking that "it was not Martha's works Jesus found blameworthy, but only her solicitude."¹ When she saw this over-eagerness in a novice she would reprove her:

¹ Luke x, 41.

"You are too much absorbed in your work," she said to one young Sister.

Souv. inédit

And to another:

"You give yourself up too much to what you do. Are you at this moment preoccupied with what is passing in other Carmels, whether the nuns there are hard-pressed or not? Do their labours draw you away from prayer? Very well, then, so, too, ought you to be detached from your personal work, employing therein conscientiously the time appointed, but with disengagement of heart."

"Cons. et Souv.,"
p. 284

"I have read that the Israelites, when building the walls of Jerusalem, worked with one hand, and with the other held a sword."¹ That is truly a figure of what we ought to do—work with but one hand, and with the other defend ourselves against dissipation of mind, which hinders union with the good God."

Id., 14 July

She counselled above all else a close union with God. She reproved a novice who was humming a hymn in a careless manner, and another who, through want of attention, seated herself sideways on a chair.

Souv. inédit

"How few souls there are who do not perform some actions negligently and imperfectly! How rare are they who in all things do their very best!"

6 Aug.

No less did the angelic Thérèse esteem purity of heart:

"Let us make of our heart a garden of delights, where our sweet Saviour may come for repose," she writes; "let us plant therein beautiful lilies of purity,

C.,
14 Oct., 189

¹ 2 Esdras iv, 17.

for we are virgins . . . and then let us not forget that 'virginity is a complete indifference to all earthly cares; not only to useless cares, but to *all cares*. . . .'

C.,
23 July, 1891

"What a grace to be a virgin, to be the spouse of Jesus! It must be truly sublime, since she who was of all creatures the purest, and gifted beyond all others with the highest intelligence, would choose rather to remain Virgin than to become Mother of a God. . . ."

C.,
May, 1890

"The purest hearts are often the most tried by temptation, they are often overwhelmed with darkness; they believe then that they have lost their whiteness, that the thorns which surround them have torn their white robes. But no, lilies in the midst of thorns are always preserved; it is in these that Jesus takes delight. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation."¹

She wished to turn "her lilies" away from the vanity of sensible affections.

She wrote to one soul who was weak in this respect and frequently inclined to sadness:

"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 264

"It is a great trial to see only the black side of things, but that does not depend altogether upon you. Do all you can to detach your heart from the cares of this world, and *above all from creatures*; then you may be sure that Jesus will do the rest."

The Servant of God herself exercised all her prudence in practising this disengagement from creatures.

¹ James i, 12.

She never expected to be repaid by marks of affection and gratitude for the care she took to diffuse joy around her and to do good.

Someone remarked to her how sad it is when, at times, we receive only indifference and ingratitude for our services, adding that whenever it so happened to her she felt much disappointed.

"I at first experience the same feeling of sadness," replied Thérèse, "but I am never disappointed, for I do not expect any reward on earth; I do all for the good God, and in so doing I am always well repaid for the trouble I give myself."

9 May

"If to please were my aim, I know I should be quickly discouraged; a word, said with the best intention, will perhaps have a quite contrary construction put on it. Therefore, so as to lose neither time nor trouble, I try to act solely to rejoice the Heart of Jesus, and to respond to the counsels He gives us in the Gospel."

Ch. x, p. 192

Consequently she acts towards others with so much of the supernatural spirit that "it would be impossible for her to do better for Jesus Himself."

Id., p. 195

Lastly, in her prudence, she finds a most judicious method of bearing suffering—that of not looking forward beyond the present hour.

Dreaming of the morrow, inconstancy I fear,
Within my heart is born disquiet, e'en dismay;
But gladly do I welcome the trials present here,
Jesus, *for this one day!*

"Mon chant
d'aujourd'-
hui," p. 377

Well could St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus have said with the author of Ecclesiasticus: "When I was yet

young . . . I sought for wisdom. . . . My heart delighted in her. . . . From my youth up I sought after her. I bowed down my ear a little, and received her. I found much wisdom in myself, and profited much therein."¹

"The Lord hath given her a tongue for a reward, He hath made the wisdom of her heart flow forth in eloquent streams."²

SECTION IV

The Loving Acceptance of Suffering

We read in Holy Scripture, "Many waters cannot quench charity, neither can the floods drown it,"³ and in the *Imitation of Christ*, "Love is devoted to God without reserve and is always full of gratitude, ever trusting and hoping in Him even when it tasteth not the relish of God's sweetness."⁴ Of such nature was the love of St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus in her acceptance of suffering. This it was which wonderfully increased *her virtue of fortitude*.

Like us, however, she sought to know the reason for this law of suffering to which all men here below are subjected:

"How," she wrote, "can the good God who so loves us be happy when we suffer? . . ."

But very soon she solved the problem, and recognized the inestimable benefits which flow from trials. She continues:

¹ Ecclus. li, 18, 20, 21, 22.

³ Cant. viii, 7.

² Cf. Ecclus. li, 30.

⁴ Cf. "Imit." III, v, 7.

“Oh no, never does our suffering make Him happy, but *suffering is necessary for us*; therefore He sends it to us while, as it were, turning away His face.”

Souv. inédits

“*It costs Him*,” she says again, “*to make us drink at the fount of tears*, but He knows that *it is the one way by which to prepare us to know Him as He knows Himself*, and to become ourselves God-like.”¹

C.,
8 May, 1888

She discovers also another motive:

“Not yet are we in our Fatherland, and *temptation must purify us as gold is purified by the action of fire*.”

C.,
7 July, 1884

In early youth she had written:

“It is quite true that the drop of gall must be mingled in every cup, but I find that *thorns greatly help to detach us from earth; they make us look higher than this world*.”

A., 1887

And a little later:

“He, and He alone, orders the events of our life of exile; He it is who presents to us now and again the bitter chalice. He permits that the purest joys be changed into sorrows, so that, not having, as it were, even the time to breathe freely, *our soul may turn to Him alone*.”

C.,
20 Oct., 1889

In another letter she says humbly:

“Jesus knows well that if He sent me only the shadow of happiness, I would become attached to it with all the energy, all the strength of my heart; therefore does He refuse to me even that shadow of

A.,
Jan., 1889

¹ Arminjon: *Fin du monde présent*.

happiness. He prefers to leave me in darkness rather than give me a false light which would not come from Himself."

She regarded our life of trials here below as merely transitory, "a night spent in a bad inn."¹ This view of it was to her a sweet consolation shedding upon all her crosses the sacred light of eternity.

C.,
18 July, 1850

"Time is but a shadow, a dream . . ." she wrote to her sister. "Already God sees us in glory, He rejoices in our eternal beatitude. . . . How this thought sustains my soul! *I understand then why He lets us suffer. . . .*"

Quite early in her religious life Thérèse tasted the fruits of suffering. She writes:

Ch. ii, p. 21

"*Trial had ripened and strengthened my soul to such a degree that nothing here below could any longer sadden me.*"

In truth, during her great family trial, she declares that her heart is raised above all passing things, and exclaims in her gratitude:

C.,
14 July, 1889

"How has Jesus acted in order to detach our souls from everything created? Ah! He has struck a heavy blow, but it is a *stroke given out of love. . . .* God is admirable, but above all *He is lovable.*"

She likes to seek out the hidden depths in the life of Jesus and His holy Mother; seeing that God did not spare them suffering, she esteems her own the more, and says:

C.,
18 July, 1890

"Jesus, in His immense love, has chosen for us of all crosses the most precious. . . . *How can we*

¹ St Teresa of Avila.

complain when He Himself has been considered 'as one struck by God and afflicted' ?"¹

And in a hymn to the Blessed Virgin :

Since the King of Heaven hath willed His Mother dear
To endure earth's night of darkness, and anguish of heart,
Ah, then, *it must be good that we should suffer here. . . .*

* * * * *

" Pourquoi
je t'aime,"
p. 429

Again, she says: " In this land of exile we meet
with many a thorn and many a bitter plant; *but is
not this the portion earth gave to our Divine Spouse?*
It is fitting, then, to consider good and most beautiful
this same portion which has become our
own. . . ."

C.,
26 April, 1899

She shows herself eager for it because "*the thorns,
by tearing us, allow the fragrance of our love to
exhale.*"

C.,
14 July, 1889

'Neath suffering's bitter winepress
I will prove my love to Thee;
To immolate myself each day
My chosen joy shall be.

" Mes Désirs
près du
Tabernacle,"
p. 405

She knows that our Divine Master has ransomed us
by the Cross, and that in order to co-operate with
Him in the redemption of the world we must pay the
same price. She alludes to this in the following
terms :

" Jesus has for us a love so incomprehensible, so
delicate, that He does not wish to do anything with-
out making us His co-operators. *He wills that we
should have part with Him in the salvation of souls.*
The Creator of the universe awaits the prayer, the
immolation of one poor little soul to save a multitude

C.,
15 Aug., 1899

¹ Isa. liii, 4.

of others, redeemed like her at the price of His blood."

L.,
13 Aug., 1893

"We must live on sacrifices; *would life without that be meritorious?*" she writes to one of her sisters.

C.,
28 Feb., 1889

"Oh, let us not fail to profit by the trial that Jesus sends us! Let us not miss our opportunity of working this mine of gold. . . ."

Her interior trials appear to her as a guarantee of salvation for poor souls who have strayed:

C.,
July, 1893

"I have read in the holy Gospel that the Divine Shepherd leaves in the desert all His faithful flock to go in haste after the sheep that is lost.¹ How touching is this confidence! He is sure of them, they are captives of Love; how could they break away? Even so does the well-beloved Shepherd of our souls *deprive us of His presence in order to give His consolations to sinners.*"

She declares that often God tries those souls the most whose faith is immovable, because He knows that He can count on the fidelity of their love.

Ch. vi, p. 111-
112

"Jesus teaches me," she says, "that for a soul whose faith equals only a tiny grain of mustard seed He works miracles, in order that this faith, which is so weak, may be strengthened; but for His intimate friends, for His Mother, He did not work miracles *until He had first tried their faith.*"

She writes in poetic strain to her sister:

C.,
6 July, 1893

"The morning of our life is passed, we have enjoyed the fragrant breezes of the dawn; but when the sun-rays have grown strong, Jesus has led us

¹ Cf. Luke xv, 4.

into His garden, He has made us gather the myrrh of trial by separating us from all and depriving us even of the joy of His presence."

"He does not wish that we should love Him for His gifts; it is Himself alone who must be our reward."

C.,
2 Aug., 1893

She thinks that God, in His delicate consideration for His creature, wishes also to procure for her, by this trial, the means of showing herself generous towards Him:

"This trouble is a tender considerateness on the part of Jesus," she says; "it means that He desires to receive a present from us."

C.,
26 Aug., 1893

And again:

"He asks that we give alms to Him as to one that is poor; He holds out His hand to receive an alms of love proved by suffering and by combat. . . ."

C.,
2 Aug., 1893

"He wants to be able to say to us as to His Apostles: *'You are they who have continued with Me in My temptations.'*"¹

C.,
7 July, 1894

With sadness she adds:

"The temptations of Jesus—what a mystery! He too, then, has been tried. Yes, He has had His trials, and often has He trodden the winepress alone.² 'I looked for one that would grieve together with me, but there was none: and *for one that would comfort me, and I found none.*'"³

Id.

This manner of looking upon suffering with love, and from a viewpoint of the graces that flow there-

¹ Luke xxii, 28.

² Isa. lxiii, 3.

³ Ps. lxviii, 21.

from, rendered it dear to our Saint; so dear that at the close of her life she wrote :

F., 1897

"Long since *has suffering become my heaven here below*, and it is difficult to conceive how it will be possible for me to become acclimatized in a land where joy reigns unmingled with sadness. Jesus must completely transform my soul, otherwise I should be unable to bear eternal bliss."

And just before death, when at the acme of physical and mental suffering, she said with assurance to her Mother Prioress :

25 and
30 Sept.

Ch. xii, p. 254

"No, I have not been deceived; all that I have written concerning *my happiness in suffering* is quite, quite true."

This *happiness in suffering* was evident in the various phases of the life of our Saint; it is the practical realization of her doctrine on the meaning and value of suffering.

Ch. iv, p. 61

Soon after her first Holy Communion her "heart was fired with an ardent desire of suffering, which became her attraction; in it she found charms that entranced her."

Nevertheless, she remarks :

31 July

"Cons. et
Souv.," p. 267

"Until the age of fourteen I practised virtue without feeling its sweetness. I desired suffering, but without thought of finding my joy therein."

F.,
26 July, 1897

"The Cross has accompanied me from the cradle," she says in another place, "and Jesus has made me love it passionately."

C.,
8 May, 1888
A., 1889

She called "a day without suffering a day lost."

"To win the palm no suffering is too great!"

Such is the war-cry of her early youth, and later we shall hear her say:

“Do you know what days are Sundays and festivals for me? They are those on which the good God tries me the most.”

“Cons. et
Souv.,” p. 2

If bitter suffering be the lot
That comes your heart to greet,
O find your happiness therein . . .
Endure for God, 'tis sweet. . . .

“Hist. d'u
Bergère,”
p. 464

“In my childhood,” she told the novices, “on awakening in the morning I used to think over what would be likely to occur either pleasing or vexatious during the day; and if I foresaw only trying events, I rose dispirited. Now it is quite the other way; thinking of the difficulties and sufferings that await me, I rise all the more joyous and full of courage the more I foresee opportunities of proving my love to Jesus, and earning a livelihood for my children, since I am mother of souls. . . .”

“Cons. et
Souv.,” p.

We read in her autobiography:

“When we want to attain an end, we must employ the means, and Jesus having made me understand that He would give me souls by means of the Cross, the more crosses I met with, the more did my attraction to suffering increase.”

Ch. vii, p. 1

Let us hear her now, at the time when she was heart-broken with sorrow on account of the trial that her venerable father was undergoing:

“What a privilege from Jesus! How He must love us to have sent us so great a trial. Eternity will not be long enough to bless Him for it. He showers

C.,
Jan., 1889

His favours upon us as He showered them upon the greatest saints."

C.,
Jan., 1889

"Henceforward we have nothing more to hope for on earth; suffering alone remains to us. How enviable is our lot!"

C.,
28 Feb., 1889

"Far from complaining to Jesus of the cross that He sends us, I cannot fathom the *infinite* love that has led Him to treat us thus. . . ."

C.,
31 Dec., 1889

"The year just passed away has been good; yes, it has been precious for heaven; may that which is to follow be like it!"

In her childhood she had had a sort of prophetic vision of the trial here referred to.¹ She reveals this in her memoirs, and continues:

Ch. ii, p. 33

"How much I admire the providence of God in showing me in advance this most precious cross, just as a father will give his children an outline of the glorious future he is preparing for them, and in His love He takes pleasure in contemplating the priceless treasures which would be their heritage."

Ch. vii, p. 126

"Later, in heaven, we shall like to commune together concerning these sombre days of exile. Yes, the three years of my father's martyrdom appear to me the most precious, the most fruitful of our life; I would not exchange them for the most sublime ecstasies; and my heart, in presence of this inestimable treasure, cries out in its gratitude: 'We have rejoiced for the days wherein Thou hast humbled us: for the years in which we have seen evils.'"²

We find these same accents ever on her lips in the

¹ *Hist.* ch. ii, p. 32.

² Ps. lxxxix, 15.

midst of constant trials which, "far from causing her pain, give her, on the contrary," as she tells us, "extreme pleasure."

Ch. viii, p. 132

She was able to write :

"I thank Thee, O my God, for all the graces Thou hast bestowed on me, and particularly for having made me pass through the crucible of suffering."

Offrande,
p. 306

In the same spirit she sang :

To live Love's life—it is not, in this world,
To fix our tent on Thabor's lofty height;
Rather, with Jesus toil up Calvary's hill—
Counting the Cross a treasure, viewed aright.
In Heaven my life unclouded joy shall be,
For pain and sorrow have no place above;
But here, I choose in suffering to live
The life of Love.

"Vivre
d'Amour,"
p. 380

We know that this spirit was hers to the very end of her life. Two months before her death she confides to one of her "spiritual brothers" :

"I do not desire to be delivered from the sufferings of this life, *because suffering united to love is the only thing which appears to me desirable in this valley of tears.*"

F.,
26 July, 1897

And, encouraging him in his missionary vocation which destined him to sufferings and persecutions, she adds :

"It is, in truth, more through suffering and persecution than through eloquent preaching that Jesus wills to establish his kingdom in souls."

F., 1897

Supernatural joy, and even natural, experienced in immolation does not exclude *pain*. See how St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus reveals her mind on the subject from different viewpoints :

And first it is in the combat against self that she feels the sharpness of sacrifice. During her postulancy, on the occasion of difficulties multiplied for her by a lay-Sister, who was very good but who, it seems, made it her business to exercise Thérèse's patience, she writes to Mother Agnès de Jésus :

A., 1888

"I am a poor little ball all riddled with pin-pricks, and *I am worn out*. The holes, it is true, are but tiny, yet they cause me to suffer more than would a big one, made all at once. They make the little ball *tremble*. . . . I am nevertheless truly *happy*, happy to suffer all that Jesus permits. . . ."

Again, she writes to her sister Céline :

C.,
12 March,
1889

"I find no joy save one—that of suffering for Jesus, and this *unfelt* joy is above every other."

Later she will encourage the novices with words like these :

"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 286

"If only you could see the angels who, from the heights of heaven, watch your struggle in the arena ! They await the end of the combat to cover you with flowers and crowns. You know well that we claim to be *little martyrs*; it is for us, therefore, to win our palms."

In her poem concerning St Joan of Arc she puts these words on the lips of the archangel presenting a sword to the heroine :

"La Vocation
de Jeanne
d'Arc," p. 451

To be a conqueror thou first must fight;
The palm ! the crown ! nay, such are not for thee,
Till merited with honour on the field. . . .

When her faith in the existence of heaven is put to trial she expresses her thought thus :

Ch. ix, p. 160

"I tell Jesus that *I am glad* to be unable on earth

to contemplate with the eyes of the soul the beautiful heaven that awaits me, so He will deign to open it for eternity to poor unbelievers. Moreover, notwithstanding this trial which *deprives me of all feeling of joy*, I can yet exclaim: 'Thou hast given me, O Lord, delight in Thy doings.'¹ For is there a greater joy than to suffer for Thy Love?"

Already, when the cross pressed so heavily on her family, she had written:

"My desire of suffering was now gratified to the full, yet my attraction towards it did not diminish, and soon my soul shared the anguish of my heart. Aridity increased; *from neither heaven nor earth did I receive any consolation*; and yet in the midst of the waters of tribulation *I was the happiest of beings*."

Ch. vii, p.

Astonishing contradictions which give the keynote on joy in suffering—to have no feeling of enjoyment, to meet with no consolation anywhere, yet to be happy! . . .

"*Happiness*," declares Thérèse again, "I find only in suffering *without any consolation*."

A., 1889

It was this that she wished to express in speaking of *joy unfelt*; she sets forth her thought still more clearly in a letter to her eldest sister:

"If you desire *to feel* joy, to have an attraction to suffering, it is then your consolation that you seek, since when we love something the pain disappears."

M.,
17 Sept., 1889

Consequently she did not expect her sensible impressions to share the feelings of her heart.

"Let us not expect to find love without suffering,"

C.,
12 March,
1889

¹ Ps. xci, 5.

she writes; "our nature must be taken into account, and that means something; but what treasures it enables us to acquire. It is our wealth, our means of gain."

"Let us suffer, if needs be, with bitterness and without courage. Jesus truly suffered with sadness. Without sadness would the soul suffer? And we would suffer generously, grandly; what illusion!"

F.,
26 Dec., 1895

"It is very consoling to think that Jesus—Divine Strength itself—has experienced all our weakness, that He trembled at sight of the bitter chalice, the chalice He had longed for so ardently."

Therefore she is not afraid to acknowledge herself sad. She writes to her youngest sister:

C.,
12 March,
1889

"*Your letter has filled my heart with a great sadness.* . . . No, 'the thoughts of Jesus are not our thoughts, nor His ways our ways.'¹ He presents to us a chalice as bitter as our weak nature can bear. . . . Let us not withdraw our lips from this chalice prepared by His divine hand; let us suffer with peace of soul. . . ."

Ch. vi, p. 107

She knows that this peace resides only in the innermost depths, "*for bitterness fills her soul even to the brim.* . . ."

Ch. viii, p. 135

We have already seen her "weep" in receiving the cross, which, nevertheless, she calls a "jewel from Jesus," weep to the extent of being "scarce able to hold her pen."

C.,
23 Sept., 1890

C.,
28 Feb., 1889

"Oh, *how it costs*," she says, "to give to Jesus that which He asks; but what joy that it does

¹ Isa. lv, 8.

cost . . . what happiness to carry our crosses with *feeble* steps. . . .”

“Painful indeed is our exile on earth, especially at those times when all seem to abandon us. But then is the precious time, ‘then dawns the day of salvation. . . .’”¹

C.,
8 July, 1891

“I, a little grain of sand, I will set to work *without courage, without strength*; since ‘power is made perfect in infirmity,’² this very helplessness will make it easier for me; I will work through love.”

C.,
28 Feb., 1889

The words uttered by our Saint during her last illness, in anguish of heart and of soul, all manifest the same loving and often joyful acceptance. For the sake of greater interest they are given here simply according to date:

In answer to the remark, “You may perhaps suffer much before death,” she replied:

“Oh, do not feel troubled! I have so great a desire to suffer. . . .”

30 May

Why are you so gay to-day?

“Because this morning I have had two little trials; nothing gives me *little joys* like *little trials*.”

19 May

“I desired to suffer, and I have been heard. One morning, during my thanksgiving, I felt, as it were, the agonies of death, and with that the absence of all consolation. But this is as it should be; this it is which adorns my soul for heaven.”

4 June

“I am happy to suffer alone; the moment I am

Ch. xii, p. 234

¹ 2 Cor. vi, 2.

² 2 Cor. xii, 9.

pitied and surrounded with delicate attentions I no longer feel this joy."

"I am sure you are in great pain?"

15 June

"Yes, but that pleases me."

4 July

"Our Lord died in anguish upon the cross, and yet *His was the most beautiful death of love*. To die of love is not to die in transports."

10 July

"The good God is trying me exteriorly and interiorly, so that I may give Him more proofs of abandonment and of love."

To one who expressed the desire that the term of her martyrdom might soon be reached she replied :

25 July

"You must not wish for that, because to suffer is just what pleases me in this life."

29 July

"I have no capacity for enjoyment; this I have always noticed. But I have a very great capacity for suffering."

Pointing to a glass on her table, which contained a draught of medicine of a beautiful bright red colour, having the appearance of a nice syrup, she said :

30 July

"See this little glass; one would imagine it full of some choice liqueur, but in reality I take nothing more bitter. Well, this is an image of my life, which to the eyes of others has always appeared clothed in the most radiant hues; to them it seemed that I drank delicious liqueur, while in truth it was bitter-

ness. I say bitterness, and yet my life has not been bitter, for I have known how to make of all bitterness my sweetness and my joy."

"I have found happiness and joy only in suffering, and I have suffered much here below; should this be any the less true because most frequently no trace of it has appeared to the eyes of creatures? . . ."

"I think on the words of St Ignatius of Antioch. I, too, must be ground down by suffering, that so I may become the wheat of God."

"I believe that the devil has demanded permission of the good God to tempt me by extreme suffering, in order to make me fail in patience and faith. But I would not wish to suffer less. . . ."

And, pointing out to one of her sisters a very dark place in the garden:

"Stay! You see that black hole yonder? Behold the place where I am as regards both soul and body. . . . Oh, what darkness! But I am at peace there."

Such are the perfumes of the loving acceptance of suffering exhaled by "the little flower of Jesus which bloomed in the shadow of His Cross, having for life-giving dew His tears, His precious Blood, and for radiant sun His adorable Face.

SECTION V

Humility

"When the just man abides in the depths of his poverty, contemplating in himself his nothingness and helplessness; when he sees himself incapable of progress, of perseverance; when he sees the multitude of his negligences and of his faults, he penetrates into the valley of humility. Prostrate in his misery, recognizing his distress, with lamentations he exposes it before the mercy of the Lord; he contemplates the height of Heaven and his own littleness. The valley deepens. . . . This is why the Christ-Sun, from his noonday height darts into the heart of this humble one a thousand rays, a thousand splendours. He cannot but be touched, and His liberality does not restrain itself; it flows, it is poured out, for the soul is then in the disposition to receive it; and hence is she illumined by grace and enkindled by Love."—B. RUSBROCK.¹

We now touch upon the virtues which relate more directly to the "*Little Way*" of our Saint. Humility, being its essential part, holds the first place amongst these virtues, for "from humility spring liberty of spirit and confidence; the helplessness of the humble will be turned into wisdom."²

M. G., 1894

"When we see ourselves too wretched," said Thérèse, "we no longer wish to look at self; we regard only the sole Beloved."

It was because she had so steadfastly regarded Him, and therefore so well knew Him, that she put self completely in the background, placing all her trust in Him and seeking all support in Him alone.

Then humility became her most marked characteristic, for if *love* be the ground traversed in the Little

¹ Blessed John Ruysbroeck, called "the Admirable," Prior of the Abbey of Groenendael, fourteenth century.

² Blessed John Ruysbroeck.

Way, the soul that walks therein personifies humility. One will be convinced of the fact after having noticed the general traits of this virtue in Thérèse.

First she states to what degree we ought to humble ourselves in order to be truly *poor in spirit*:

“See to what degree we should descend, so that we might serve as a dwelling for Jesus: we ought to be so poor that we ‘have not where to lay our head.’ ”¹

C.,
19 Oct., 1892

And on the same subject:

“Our God, the Guest of our heart, knows our misery; therefore He comes in the expectation of finding within us an *empty tent*; that is all He asks. . . .”

C.,
7 July, 1894

Convinced of this truth and of her powerlessness for all good, the Servant of God sought to disengage her heart more and more, for she deemed it not yet “empty of self.” And nevertheless, to what depths did she descend by the *sentiments of humility* that she expressed on every occasion?

C.,
19 Oct., 1892

Commencing the story of her life, Thérèse recognized that there was nothing in her capable of attracting the notice of Jesus.

Ch. i, p. 7

She writes:

“The good God who willed to call to Him the least and weakest amongst us hastened to develop her wings. He who is pleased to show His goodness and His power in making use of the least worthy instruments willed, indeed, to call me before Céline, who undoubtedly merited this favour more than I

Notes inédites

¹ Cf. Luke ix, 58.

did; but Jesus knew how weak I was; that is why He has hidden me the first in the cleft of the rock."

And, speaking of a young girl greatly exposed to danger:

C.
19 Aug., 1894

"If I had been in her place I should long since have been lost for ever in the vast forest of the world."

One Holy Communion day, during her last illness, at the moment when the community recited the *Confiteor* near her bed, she had a most vivid impression of her misery, and confided afterwards to Mother Agnès de Jésus:

12 Aug.

"I saw," said she, "the good Jesus about to give Himself to me, and this confession appeared to me a very necessary humiliation: 'I confess to God, to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to all the Saints, that I have sinned exceedingly. . . .' Oh yes, I said interiorly, they do well at this moment to ask pardon for me of God and of all the Saints. I share the sentiments of the publican; I feel myself to be a great sinner. The good God appeared to me so merciful, I found it so touching to seek the intercession of the whole court of heaven to obtain God's pardon. . . ."

She had copied upon one of the pictures in her breviary these words of the Gospel: "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee;¹ but be merciful to me a sinner."²

Even the faults of which she has not been guilty give her opportunity of humbling herself:

¹ John xxi, 16.

² Luke xviii, 13.

"Jesus wills that I love Him," she wrote, "because He has forgiven me, not much, but *all*. . . ."

Ch. iv, p. 65

" . . . He has forgiven me *beforehand* the sins which I could have committed."¹

C.,
23 July, 189

Side by side with sentiments of humility was developed in Thérèse *distrust of self*.

At ten years of age, during a visit to friends of her father's, where she was "made very welcome and much petted," she experienced that "the bewitching of trifles misleadeth the mind, however remote it be from evil."²

Ch. iv, p. 55

Id.

She acknowledges that this sort of life was full of charm for her. From that time forward she trembled at her weakness, and to see herself preserved from dangerous occasions made her write with humble gratitude:

"I know well that the good God judged me too weak to be exposed to temptation; without doubt I should have been wholly destroyed by the deceitful glamour of the love of creatures."

Id., p. 64

A little later she prays to St Joseph, "Father and Protector of Virgins," to safeguard the lily of her innocence:

"I begged him," she says, "to put far from me

Ch. vi, p. 99

¹ Unconsciously she entered into the thought of Blessed John Ruysbroeck, who had long before said: "The humility of the Virgin Mary, conceived without sin, is more sublime than that of Magdalen. The latter was pardoned, the former was sinless. But this absolute immunity, more sublime than any pardon, caused to ascend from earth to heaven a thanksgiving that was more glorious than the conversion of Magdalen."

² Cf. Wisd. iv, 12.

all occasions of sin; having no knowledge of evil, I dreaded to discover it."

Ch. iv, p. 65

Her fear "of offending the good God" went even beyond bounds, and at one time, when she was about thirteen years of age, degenerated into scrupulosity.

On the day of her Profession she made this prayer:

Ch. viii, p. 134

"O Jesus, my Divine Spouse, take me out of this life rather than let me sully my soul by committing the very least voluntary fault."

Later, in her temptation against faith, she will exclaim:

Ch. ix, p. 159

"The sole grace that I ask of Thee, my God, is—never to offend Thee."

During her retreat for Profession she writes to Mother Agnès de Jésus:

A., 1890

"Beg the good God to grant me the grace never more to offend Him, or at least to commit no faults but such as do not offend Him!"

Ch. viii, p. 136

A religious, to whom she laid bare her soul, set her entirely at rest on this point by "making her certain that her faults did not pain the good God. This assurance made her bear patiently her exile on earth."

St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus was not only diffident of self, but was also animated with a holy desire of *being ignored and considered of no account*.

The day of her Profession she carried this written prayer upon her heart:

Id., p. 134

"O Jesus, grant that none concern themselves about me, that I may be forgotten, trodden under foot like *a little grain of sand!*"

While yet a postulant she writes to one of her sisters :

“ . . . I no longer wish for anything but to be forgotten. . . . Neither contempt nor injuries do I seek ; these would be too glorious for the ‘ grain of sand,’ because to despise a grain of sand one should see it and think about it. . . . I wish to be forgotten, and not only by fellow-creatures, but also by myself, so as to have no longer any desire unless it be to love the good God.”

A., 1888

Again, she wrote :

“ What happiness to be so completely *hidden* that no one thinks of you—to be *unknown*, even to those who live with you.”

A., 1892

Long before her entrance to the Carmel, Jesus had made her understand that “ the true, the only glory, is that which will last for ever ; that to attain it we need not accomplish works of renown, but rather *hide* ourselves from the eyes of others and even from self.”

Ch. iv, p. 55

A novice said to her :

“ Happy indeed are you in being chosen to point out to souls the ‘ Way of Spiritual Childhood.’ ”

She replied :

“ Why should that make me happy ? Why should I desire that the good God should make use of me rather than of another ? Provided that His reign be established in souls, the instrument matters little ! ”

“ Cons. et
Souv., ”
p. 269

She was speaking confidentially one day of her desire to die of love for the good God, and added humbly :

“ But I am not anxious that *it may so appear*, 14 July

provided that it may so be. Our Lord died of love upon the cross, and see what an agony was His!"

She had written:

C.,
2 Aug., 1893

"Let us not forget that Jesus is a *hidden* Treasure; few souls know how to find it, for people like that which glitters. . . . 'To find a *hidden* thing he who seeks it must *hide* himself.'¹ May our life be as a mystery hidden. . . ."

Ch. vii, p. 129

Id., p. 117

She "therefore applied herself to *well-concealed* little acts of virtue . . ." and as she "wished to be faithful and to act *in the sight of Jesus alone*," there were many of these acts "*that remained ever unknown*."

On the subject of interior desolation she discloses in confidence that—

Id., p. 118

"For five years this way was mine; but *I alone knew it*. Here was just the *hidden* flower that I wanted to offer to Jesus, this flower which *exhaled its fragrance for heaven alone*."

And shortly before her death she said:

7 Aug.

"These words of Isaias—'There is no beauty in Him, nor comeliness. . . . His face was, as it were, *hidden* and despised; we have seen him and we have not recognized him . . .'²—have been the foundation of my love of the holy face, or, to better express it, the groundwork of all my devotion. *I, too, desired to be, like Jesus, without earthly glory, without beauty, unknown to all*."

Although Thérèse considered contempt "too glorious for her," yet from the age of fourteen the

¹ St John of the Cross.

² Cf. Isa. liii, 2, 3.

words of St John of the Cross—"Lord to suffer and to be despised"—excited her enthusiasm.

She writes one day to her sister :

"O heaven! heaven! How I long for it so as to see the face of Jesus, to contemplate eternally His wondrous beauty; but meanwhile I greatly desire to suffer and to be *despised* on earth."

A.,
May, 1888

In an intimate conversation our Saint confided to one of her novices that if she had been unable to remain in the Carmel she would have tried to enter a refuge, as "penitent," to live there unknown and despised.

"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 265

"I have ardently desired to be humiliated," she declares; and in the last days of her life she will experience an intense joy at the thought that she should still be found imperfect. "It is quite the contrary with compliments," she will say; "they cause me nothing but displeasure."

Ch. x, p. 19

2 Aug.

"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 268

She confesses—and her sincerity is unmistakable—that "reproaches are to her a delicious feast, that they fill her soul with joy."

Ch. x, p. 19

But she is herself astonished at this.

"How can a thing so displeasing to Nature give such happiness? Without the experience, I could not have believed it. . . ."

Id.

Regarding the praises sometimes addressed to her, she remarks :

"In truth, they do not inspire me with any vanity, for I have unceasingly present the remembrance of my miseries. *The little flower preserves in its calyx the precious drops of the dew of humiliation received in former days*, to remind it always that it is little

Id., p. 189

Ch. xi, p. 19

and weak. All creatures might incline towards it, admire it, and overwhelm it with their praises, but never would that add a shadow of vain satisfaction to *the true interior joy it experiences, knowing itself to be, in the sight of God, a poor little worthless being, nothing more.*"

And she makes this prayer :

"I beg of Thee, O my God, that 'the unction of praise' so sweet to Nature, 'enervate not my head'¹—that is to say, my mind—by making me think I possess virtues which I have practised several times only."

Pilate questioning Jesus upon Truth, and not waiting to hear His answer,² suggested to her this reflection :

"For my part, I have always said to the good God : O my God, I sincerely wish to listen to Thee. I implore Thee to answer me when I say humbly : What is truth? Grant that I may see things as they really are, that I may not be deluded by falsehood."

And God so fully heard her prayer that she has been able to write :

"The very greatest thing that the Almighty has done in me³ is *to have shown me my littleness, my powerlessness for all good.*"

Shortly before her death she remarks again :

"As for me, I have light only to *see my nothingness*. That does me more good than lights concerning faith."

One day during her illness, when a prey to extreme weakness, she had shown some slight annoyance that

¹ Cf. Ps. cxl, 5.

² John xviii, 38.

³ Luke i, 49.

22 July, 1897
"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 283

21 July

Ch. ix, p. 156

13 Aug.

this was not understood; immediately recalling the infirmarian, she said with tears :

“ Oh, I *do* beg your forgiveness ! ”

29 July

And a few minutes afterwards, in intimate conversation :

“ *How happy am I to feel myself so imperfect and to have so much need of the mercy of the good God at the moment of death !* ”

In reply to a question proposed to her :

“ I fail many a time, but I rejoice at that. I no longer succeed always in rising above the trifles of earth; for instance, a stupid thing that I shall have said or done will trouble me; then I enter into myself and say : ‘ Alas ! here am I at the starting-point as before ! ’ But I think thus with a very great sweetness and without sadness; *it is so sweet to feel oneself weak and little.* ”

5 July

She exclaims (we read it in her *Histoire*) :

“ Yes, O my God, *I am happy to feel myself little and weak in Thy presence*, and my heart remains in peace. . . . ”

Ch. xi, p. 22

A few months before her death, a Sister having asked her services, without noticing that she was in high fever, a certain emotion showed itself on her countenance, and was perceived by Mother Agnès de Jésus, who was present. In the evening Thérèse wrote this letter to her :

“ I have shown you my *virtue* to-day, my *treasures of patience* ! I who preach so well to others ! *I am glad that you should have seen my imperfection.* I feel that I have acted so badly. But I am very much happier at having been imperfect than if, sustained

A.,
28 May, 1897

by grace, I had been a model of patience; it does me so much good to see that Jesus is always so gentle, so tender towards me. . . ."

She will say later :

2 Sept.

"When we humbly accept the humiliation of having been imperfect, the good God returns to us immediately."

And, relating the above incident to a novice :

Souv. inédits

"I am sustained by the thought that Sister . . . found me without virtue . . . and *I have been happy to feel myself so, in truth.*"

Id.

She went even so far as to consider it a good thing that "her victories over self were not always complete, because instead of thinking with a certain pleasure of her courage, the remembrance of the struggle was a humiliation to her."

C.,
12 March,
1889

"We would wish never to fall," she wrote at the age of sixteen. "And what matters it to me to fall every moment? *I find great profit in it, for thereby I feel my weakness.* My God, Thou knowest of what I am capable unless Thou dost carry me in Thine arms; and if Thou leavest me alone—well, it is evidently because it pleases Thee to see me on the ground. Then I am not going to be disquieted, but I shall always hold out suppliant hands to Thee. . . . I cannot believe that Thou wouldst abandon me!"

We read in her memoirs :

Ch. vii, p. 128

"Now *I am resigned to see myself always imperfect, and I even find therein my joy.*"

Ch. ix, p. 174

"Later on it may be that this period where I now am will appear to me still to abound with many

miseries, but I am no longer astonished at anything, nor do I grieve at seeing that I am frailty itself; on the contrary, I glory therein and expect to discover new imperfections in myself each day."

And in a letter to her cousin, before the latter entered the convent :

" You are mistaken if you think that I walk with alacrity in the path of sacrifice. I am weak, very weak; of this I have new and salutary experience every day. But Jesus takes pleasure in teaching me how to *glory in my infirmities*.¹ It is a great grace this, for therein is found peace with tranquillity of heart."

M. G., 1894

" I am a very little soul who can offer only very little things to the good God; yet it often happens that these little sacrifices which give such peace to the heart escape me. But *that does not discourage me*; I bear with having a little less peace, and I try to be more watchful another time."

Ch. x, p. 190

In fine, this most true humility established her upon serene heights, where no thought of vanity could reach her. Henceforth, speaking of the gifts of God, she dares affirm :

" I feel that I have nothing to fear; I may enjoy these gifts now at my ease, referring to God all of good that He has in truth implanted in me. If it please Him to make me appear better than I am, that does not concern me; He is free to act as He will."

Ch. ix, p. 15

The counsels given to the novices for the practice of humility reflect the same sentiments :

¹ 2 Cor. xi, 5.

"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 273

"When we commit a fault, we must never attribute it to a physical cause, such as illness or the weather, *but rather to our own imperfection, without, however, being discouraged.* 'Occasions do not make a man frail, but they show what he is.'"¹

Id., p. 268
Souv. inédits

"That others should find you imperfect is quite right; *therein lies your gain*, for you can then practise the humility which consists in not only thinking and saying that you are full of faults, but in being happy that others, too, should think and say the same."

"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 271-272
C.,
7 June, 1897

"The only thing not liable to be envied is the lowest place; it is therefore this lowest place which alone is without vanity and affliction of spirit. However, 'the way of a man is not always in his power,'² and sometimes we are surprised into desiring that which glitters; *let us, then, rank ourselves humbly amongst the imperfect, deeming ourselves little souls whom the good God must each moment sustain.* As soon as He sees us truly convinced of our nothingness and we say to Him, 'My foot hath slipped; Thy mercy, O Lord, hath held me up,'³ He stretches out His hand to us; but if we will attempt to do something grand, even under pretext of zeal, He will leave us alone. It is enough, therefore, that we humble ourselves and *bear our imperfections* with sweetness; there, for us, lies true sanctity."

This "lowest place" is her whole ambition, for, she writes:

Ch. x, p. 204

"I have but to glance at the holy Gospel and

¹ "Imit." I, xvi, 4.

² Cf. Jer. x, 23.

³ Ps. xciii, 18.

immediately I inhale the fragrance of the life of Jesus, and I know which side to take. . . .”

She sings to Him :

In the days of Thine exile here,
Thou wast despised for me . . .
O, I would hide me 'till life be past,
Would be in all, the least and last,
Jesus, for Thee!

“ J'ai soir
d'Amour,”
p. 398

“ When we are humble,” she was wont to say,
“ we are willing to let everyone command us.”

Souv. inédits

And, speaking to a young nun employed in the infirmary, she urges humility thus :

“ You ought to consider yourself, not only as the little servant of the sick, but as a *little slave* whom all have the right to command, and whose position as slave prevents any thought of complaining.”

Id.

“ Things needful should be asked for with humility, like the poor who with outstretched hands hope to receive what is necessary; if refused, they are not astonished; no one owes them anything.”

Ch. ix, p. 169

She wrote at one time to her sister :

“ *If you are willing to bear peacefully the trial of not being pleasing to yourself, you will give an acceptable shelter to Jesus. It is true you will suffer, for you will be turned out of your own home. But fear not; the poorer you are, the more Jesus will love you.*”

C.,
12 March,
1889

A subtle jealousy thus revealed—“ I am discouraged at being unable to emulate you in the refinements of your love for the good God ”—deserved this reply :

Souv. inédits

"Each time you have this temptation, say the following prayer: 'My God, I thank Thee for not giving me a single tender feeling, and I rejoice to see them in others.'" And she added:

"That will be more pleasing to the good God than to see you always irreproachable."

"Ah, when I think of all I have to acquire!" exclaimed a novice.

"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 266

"Say, rather, *to lose!* Jesus it is who charges Himself with the care of filling your soul according as you free it from its imperfections. I see clearly that you are taking the wrong road; you will never reach the end of your journey. You want to scale a mountain, and the good God wills to make you descend; He is waiting for you low down in the fertile valley of *humility*."

To another, who was quite saddened by her lack of courage:

Id., p. 279

"You complain of what should cause your greatest happiness. Instead of grieving, *rejoice* to see that *in letting you feel your weakness*, the good God provides for you the opportunity of saving a greater number of souls."

M. G., 1894

"You want to see the fruit of your efforts," we read in a letter to her cousin; "that is just what Jesus wills to hide from you. He likes to be the only one to see these little fruits of virtue that we offer to Him and which console Him."

And in another place:

“Offer to the good God the sacrifice of never gathering the fruits of your labour; that is to say, consenting to feel during your whole life a repugnance to suffer, to be humiliated, to see all the flowers of your desires and of your goodwill fall to earth without fruit.”

“Cons. et
Souv.,”
p. 268

The fishing of the Apostles, at first fruitless, notwithstanding the efforts of a night’s labour, but abundant and miraculous from the time that they *acknowledge their powerlessness*,¹ suggests to her this wise remark:

“Perhaps if they had taken *a few little fishes* the Divine Master would not have worked a miracle; but they had *nothing*; and so, by the Divine power and goodness, their nets were soon filled with great fishes. That is just His way; He gives as God, but He *will have humility of heart*. . . .”

C.,
20 Oct., 1893

It was in this sense that she desired “to appear before the judgement-seat of God with hands empty,” having, instead of all riches, nothing but *the humble acceptance of her destitution*.

“Cons. et
Souv.,”
p. 281

“Understand me, I beseech you,” she wrote; “understand that in order to love Jesus, to be His victim of love, the weaker and more miserable we are, the better are we fitted for the operations of this consuming and transforming Love. The sole desire to be victim suffices, but we must consent to remain always poor and without strength; there lies the difficulty, for ‘where shall be found the truly poor in spirit? He must be sought afar off . . . ’”² says the

M.,
17 Sept., 1890

¹ Luke v, 5.

² Cf. “Imit.” II, xi, 4.

author of the *Imitation*. He does not say that we must seek him amongst great souls, but afar off; that is to say, in lowliness, in nothingness. . . . Oh, let us keep *afar off* from all that glitters, let us love our littleness, let us love to feel nothing; and Jesus will come to seek us, how far soever we may be, He will transform us into flames of Love."

SECTION VI

Confidence in God

With St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus great confidence in God was the natural result of her ardent love.

F., 1897

"My way is all of love and of confidence in God," she writes. "I do not understand souls who are afraid of so tender a Friend."

And she encourages the souls entrusted to her to believe her and to follow her example:

F., 1897

"I have understood in what measure your soul is sister to mine, since yours, too, is called to go to God by the *Lift of Love*, and not to climb the rugged ascent of fear."

M.,
17 Sept., 1896

". . . Is it not to the rigid justice, such as is represented to sinners, that fear leads? But it is not this justice which God will show to those who love Him."

Ch. viii, p. 147

"The Lord takes our weakness into consideration. He well knows the frailty of our nature; of what, then, should I be afraid?"

F.,
21 June, 1897

"Since it has been given to me to comprehend the love of the Heart of Jesus, I acknowledge that it has chased all fear from mine. The remembrance of my

faults humbles me, and urges me never to rely on my own strength, which is nothing but weakness; still more does this remembrance speak to me of mercy and of love. When, *with all filial confidence*, we cast our faults into the devouring furnace of Love, how should they fail to be entirely consumed?"

To live Love's life—it is to banish fear,
Nor anxious mem'ries of past faults recall;
I see no impress of my sins remain,
For Love's consuming fire effaces all.

"Vivre
d'Amour,"
p. 380

"I am far from walking in the way of fear; I know how to find the means always of being happy and of profiting by my miseries. Jesus Himself encourages me in this way."

Ch. viii, p. 14

"I have long believed that the Lord is more tender than a mother, and full well do I know more than one maternal heart. I know that a mother is ever ready to forgive the involuntary little failings of her child."

Id., p. 136

But her assurance goes further still; besides the Divine forgiveness, she hopes for a reward.

"I confide to Jesus," she writes; "I relate to Him in detail my infidelities, thinking, in my daring abandonment, *to acquire thus more empire over His Heart* and to win more fully the love of Him who is not come to call the just, but sinners."¹

Notes inédites

"It is true I am not always faithful; but I am never discouraged; I abandon myself in the arms of Jesus. Like a little dewdrop, I sink down deeper in the calyx of the Divine 'Flower of the field,'² and there *I find again all that I have lost, and a great deal more.* . . ."

C.,
18 July, 1893

¹ Matt. ix, 13.

² Cant. ii, 1.

C.,
18 July, 1893

“ Even though it should seem to me extinct, this fire of love which burns in my heart, I would still throw little straws upon the embers, and I am certain that it would rekindle ! ”

C.,
8 July, 1891

“ Jesus can do all ; confidence works miracles. . . . ”

She dares to affirm :

Souv. inédits

“ If we hope for something from the good God which He had not intended to give us, He is so powerful and so rich it concerns His honour not to leave us disappointed, and He gives it. . . . But we must say to Him : ‘ I well know that I shall never be worthy of that for which I hope ; I merely hold out my hand as a little beggar, very sure that Thou wilt hear me to the full. ’ ”

M. G., 1888

“ What offends Jesus,” she would say, “ what wounds Him to the heart, is want of confidence.”

Offrande,
p. 306

“ Immense are the desires that I feel within my heart,” we read in her Act of Oblation to Divine Love, “ and it is with confidence, O my God, that I beg Thee to come and take possession of my soul.”

She explains to us what she means by this “ taking possession ” :

Ch. x, p. 203

“ I beg of Jesus to draw me into the flames of His love, and to unite me so closely to Himself that He may live and act in me.”

See the result she hopes for :

Id.

“ I feel that the more the fire of Love enkindles my soul, the more I shall say, ‘ Draw me ! ’¹ and the more also will the souls who draw near to mine run swiftly in the sweet odours of the Beloved.”

¹ Cant. i, 3.

Pondering on all that she expects from God, and on the "love twice-told" which she has begged of the court of heaven, she exclaims, as though amazed at having dared to aim sō high :

"My desires so immense—are they not folly, a dream? Ah, if it so be, enlighten me! Thou knowest, my God, that I seek the truth. If my desires are rashly daring, make them disappear, for to me they are the greatest martyrdom."

Ch. xi, p.

Then, further considering it, she says that if heaven should fail to fulfil hopes which are the very life of her heart, the beatitude of eternity would, for her, prove inferior to the austere joys of exile.

"I confess that if I should never attain the loftiest regions to which my soul aspires, I shall have tasted more of sweetness in my martyrdom, in my folly, than I shall taste in the midst of the eternal joys; unless by a miracle Thou shouldst take from me the remembrance of my earthly hopes."

And this conclusion appearing to her inadmissible, her hope breaks forth anew :

"Jesus! Jesus! if it be so sweet to desire Thy Love, what will it be to possess it and to enjoy it for ever? . . ."

She longed to win all souls to the humble confidence that filled her own heart to overflowing.

"Oh, if all souls weak and imperfect as mine felt what I feel, not one would despair of reaching the summit of the mountain of Love!"

Id., p. 209

She goes further; she invites even sinners to share this confidence :

"Mortal sin would not rob me of my confidence.

20 July
Ch. x, p. 204

No, it is not because I have been preserved from mortal sin that I lift up my heart to God in trust and love. I feel that if there lay upon my conscience all the crimes one could commit, I should lose nothing of my confidence. Heart-broken with contrition, I would throw myself into the arms of my Saviour. I know that He cherished the Prodigal Son; I have heard His words to St Mary Magdalen, to the adulteress, to the Samaritan woman. No one could frighten me, for I know what to believe concerning His Mercy and His Love. I know that in one moment all that multitude of sins would disappear—as a drop of water thrown into a flaming furnace.

“It is related in the Lives of the Fathers of the Desert that one of them converted a public sinner whose misdeeds scandalized the entire country. Touched by grace, this sinful woman was following the saint into the desert, there to do rigorous penance, when, on the first night of her journey, before she had even reached the place of her retreat, the links of life's chain were broken by the vehemence of her loving contrition. The holy hermit at the same moment saw her soul borne by angels into the bosom of God.

“That is a most striking illustration of what I would express, but these things are beyond words.”

She gives in glowing words the reasons of her ardent and loving confidence :

Ch. xi, p. 221

“O Eternal Word! O my Saviour! Thou art the divine Eagle whom I love, who dost allure me towards Thyself. Thou, who, descending to this

land of exile, didst will to suffer and to die, that so Thou mightest bear away the souls of men and plunge them into the very heart of the Blessed Trinity—Love's eternal Source. Thou who, re-ascending into inaccessible light, dost yet remain concealed here in our vale of tears under the semblance of a snow-white Host, and this to nourish me with Thine own substance. O Jesus! suffer me to tell Thee that Thy love reaches even unto folly. . . . In face of this folly, what wilt Thou but that my heart leap up to Thee? *How could my trust have any bounds?*

“O Jesus, could I but tell all *little souls* of Thine ineffable condescension! . . . I feel that, were it possible to find one weaker than mine, Thou wouldst take delight in showering upon that soul still greater favours, *provided that she abandoned herself with entire confidence to Thine infinite mercy.*”

Now see, in all their simplicity, the last expressions of her sentiments of confidence in God:

“I have no fear of the last combats, nor of the physical sufferings, how great soever they may be. The good God has always come to my assistance; He has helped me and led me by the hand from my earliest years. . . . I count on Him. . . . My sufferings may reach the furthest limit, but I am confident that He will never abandon me.”

27 May
Ch. xii, p. 239

A prayer to the saints of heaven having received for response acute physical and mental suffering, she said with a certain pride:

23 Sept.
Ch. xii, p. 238

"I think they wish to see to what point I shall carry my trust."

15 Aug.

"The good God gives me courage just in proportion to my sufferings. . . . I feel that for the moment I should not be able to bear more; but I have no fear, for if they increase He will at the same time increase my patience."

She had written on the subject of humble confidence:

Ch. xi,
p. 219, *et suiv.*

"Alas! I am but a poor little bird, covered merely with light down. I am not an eagle; I have only the eagle's eyes and heart. . . . Yes, notwithstanding my exceeding littleness, I dare to gaze upon the divine Sun of Love, and I burn to dart upwards unto Him. I would fly, I would imitate the eagles; but all I can do is to lift up my little wings; it is beyond my feeble power to soar.

"What is to become of me? Must I die of sorrow at finding myself so helpless? No, no, I shall not even grieve. . . . With daring self-abandonment there will I remain unto death, my gaze fixed upon the divine Sun. Nothing can frighten me, neither the wind nor the rain; and if impenetrable clouds come to hide from me the Orb of Love, *then will be the moment to push my confidence to its uttermost bounds*, taking good care not to quit my post, well knowing that beyond the sombre clouds my beloved Sun still shines."

SECTION VII

Abandonment to God

Abandonment, "this delicious fruit of love,"¹ is closely allied to confidence and humility.

"Because I was little and weak," said St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus, "Jesus stooped down to me and tenderly taught me the secrets of His Love. He was pleased to show me the only path which leads to this Divine furnace; this path is *the abandonment of the little child who sleeps without fear in her Father's arms. . . .*"

Ch. v, p. 8

Ch. xi, p.

"Yes, it is the spirit of abandonment alone that guides me; no other compass have I. I know not now how to ask anything eagerly, save the perfect accomplishment of God's designs regarding my soul."

Ch. viii, p.

While yet in the world, Thérèse was intent on making the divine good pleasure the one source of her soul's peace. When, about the time of her entrance to the Carmel, "various difficulties beset her," her complete abandonment to God sustained her. She "ceased not to have in the depths of her heart a profound peace, for she sought only God's Will."

Ch. v, p. 9

"At this period," she said confidentially afterwards, "I had offered myself to the Child Jesus to be His *little plaything*. I had told Him not to treat me like a costly toy that children are content to look at without venturing to touch, but as He would a

Ch. vi, p. 1

¹ St Augustine.

little ball of no value, that He might throw to the ground, toss about, pierce, leave in a corner, or else press to His Heart if so it pleased Him. In a word, I wanted to amuse the little Jesus, and *to give myself up to all His childlike fancies.*"

After the undecisive answer of Pope Leo XIII, she wrote from Rome :

A.,
20 Nov., 1887

"Great indeed is my trial—but I am the 'little ball' of the Child Jesus; if He wishes to break His plaything to pieces He is quite free to do so; yes, *I want only what He wills.* . . ."

She made this prayer the day of her Profession :

Ch. viii, p. 134

"I offer myself to Thee, O my Beloved, that Thou mayest perfectly accomplish in me Thy holy will."

And a few years later :

C.,
6 July, 1893

"My desire is to do always the will of Jesus. Let us leave Him free to take and to give whatever He wills. *Perfection consists in doing His will, in surrendering ourselves wholly to Him.*"

Finally, when almost on the point of taking her flight to heaven, she will compose this prayer to the Holy Child, which is truly the faithful echo of her earliest aspirations :

"Prière,"
p. 309

"Dear Little Jesus, my sole treasure, *I surrender myself to Thy childlike fancies all divine*; no other joy do I desire than the delight of making Thee smile. . . ."

In the first pages of her *Histoire*, after comparing the numberless varieties of garden flowers, she wrote :

Ch. i, p. 5

"Our Lord has deemed it good to create the great Saints, who may be compared to lilies and roses, but

He has created also those of lesser brilliance, who must be content to be as daisies or simple violets at His feet, destined to gladden His divine gaze when it shall fall upon them. *The more content they are to accomplish his Will, the more perfect are they.*"

Again, she said:

"Even though others should have greater merit in giving less to the good God than I, I would rather have less merit in doing more, if, by that, I accomplished His Will."

Souv. inédit

We read in one of her last letters:

"I would not wish to enter heaven one minute sooner by my own desire. The only happiness here below is to make it our study ever to find delight in the part that Jesus appoints for us."

L.,
17 July, 1892

She had said long before:

"I wish to let Him manage my interests and play for me at Bank of Love, without taking any part in the play myself."

C.,
6 July, 1893

"That which concerns Thérèse," she added, "*is to abandon herself, to surrender herself completely.*"

Id.

She did not wish even that she might be delivered from her terrible temptation against Faith, and sang:

*'Tis the Holy Will of my sole Beloved
True peace to my heart doth give,
So night is as dear as the day to me,
And without a fear I live.*

"Ma Paix e
ma Joie,"
p. 412

Again:

To live Love's life—it is, when Jesus sleeps,
To rest untroubled on the storm-tossed sea. . . .
In peace I wait until the shore be reached;
O fear not, Lord, that I shall waken Thee!

"Vivre
d'Amour,"
p. 381

In the following verse also her thought on abandonment finds expression :

"Rappelle-toi," p. 394

Remember Thou that Thy Will beloved
Is all my repose and my joy most blest;
In holy abandonment—nothing to fear—
In Thy sacred Arms, my God, I rest.

On the fresco designed and painted by St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus in the interior oratory of the Carmel we see a little angel holding a harp; he sleeps, and he is smiling, his elbow resting on the Tabernacle. It is an image of entire abandonment in a love that is nevertheless always alert. "This little angel is myself," she said; "*he sleeps, but his heart watches.*"¹

"Mon Ciel à Moi," p. 400

Safe in His Arms divine, near His sacred Face,
Resting upon His Heart, of the storm I have no fear;
Abandonment complete, this is my only law. . . .
Behold my Heaven here!

"Cons. et Souv.," p. 264

According to her, "to remain childlike means not to let anything disquiet us." And she traces this line of conduct for a soul in trouble :

C.,
23 July, 1893

As regards steering his barque, "the one thing proper for a little child is to abandon himself, to let his sail be filled at the mercy of the wind. . . ."

C.,
12 March, 1889

At sixteen years of age she writes to her sister :
"To suffer peacefully is not always to find consolation in the suffering, for peace is not always accompanied by joy, not, at least, by sensible joy. . . . *To suffer with peace it suffices that we truly will all that God wills.*"

¹ Cant. v, 2.

When there was question of her departure for the Carmel of Hanoi, she accepted it, not with a view to being useful there, but with the sole aim of fulfilling God's Will. She proved it by these words :

"I am ill now, and I shall not recover. However, I am at peace. *For a long time past I have not belonged to myself; I am wholly surrendered to Jesus. . . . He is free to do with me all that pleases Him.* He gave me the attraction for complete exile, He asked me if I consented to drink this chalice; I longed immediately to take it from His hand. But He, withdrawing it, showed me that He was satisfied with the mere acceptance."

Ch. ix, p. 16

And when two of her sisters were appointed to go in her stead :

"I accepted," she will say later, "not only exile for myself in the midst of an unknown people, but, what was far more bitter to me, I accepted exile for my sisters. Oh, *I would not have wished to say one word to keep them back*, but I was heart-broken at the thought of the trials awaiting them."

Id., p. 163

Her obedience to superiors also assumed the character of most absolute abandonment. She confides this to her Mother Prioress :

"It seems to me that I would not change my attitude towards you, and that my filial affection would suffer no diminution if it pleased you to treat me severely, because I should still see *the Will of my God* manifested in another way for the greater good of my soul."

Id., p. 165

She desired, she sought, the means of surrendering herself ever more and more to Jesus. A novice having told her of the strange phenomena produced by magnetism on persons who yield up their will to the mesmeriser, the details appeared to interest her keenly, and on the morrow she said to the Sister :

"Cons., et
Souv.,
p. 290

"The subject you talked of yesterday has done me good. Oh, *how I wish to be magnetized by Jesus!* It was my first thought on awakening. *With what delight have I delivered up my will to Him.* Yes, I want Him to make Himself master of my faculties in such sort that my actions shall no longer be human or personal, but wholly divine, inspired and directed by the Spirit of Love."

This entire abandonment to the good pleasure of God rendered her as indifferent to the prospect of an early death as to that of a long life. Convincing proof of this has already been given in other parts of the present work. She bears testimony to it unceasingly by simple and profound reflections such as these :

F., 1897

"It is *the call of the Lord* that draws me towards heaven, the Fatherland."

Her one aim, in truth, is to fulfil the divine Will without care concerning her joy and her repose :

21 May

"I am completely abandoned to the good God," she said, "to live, to die, to get well and go to Cochin-China if He so wills."

27 May

Ch. xii, p. 237

"I have no greater desire to die than to live; if Jesus offered me the choice, I would choose nothing. I want only what He wills; *it is what He does that I love.* . . . Let no one think, if I recover, that that

will defeat and put an end to my *little plans*. Not at all! Age is nothing in the sight of the good God, and I shall know how to manage so as to remain a little child even in living a very long time."

"The good God wills that I surrender myself like a very wee child who does not trouble himself as to what shall be done with him." 15 June

"I have never wished to ask favours of the good God; if, for instance, I had said, on the day of my first Holy Communion, 'My God, grant me the favour of dying young,' I should greatly regret it to-day." 27 July

"According to nature, I would rather die, but my soul has acquired great dominion over my nature, and now I can only repeat to the good God: 2 Aug.

"Long, long yet will I gladly live,
If such Thy desire for me,
Or speedily join Thy train above,
If this be pleasing to Thee.
Love, the fire of the Fatherland
Ceases not to consume me. . . .
What matters it then whether life or death?
My only joy is to love Thee."

"Ma Paix et
ma Joie,"
p. 413

"Would you be pleased," questioned a Sister, "if it were announced to you that you would die in a few days? Would you not like that better than the prospect of suffering more and more for months and years?"

"Oh no, I would not be at all more pleased; that which alone pleases me is to do the will of the good God." 3 Aug.

She repeats it again and always :

4 Sept.

" I do not like one thing better than another ; what the good God likes best and chooses for me, that it is which pleases me most."

5 June

" If I should die without having received Extreme Unction, you must just think that *Papa, the good God*, has simply come to fetch me, that is all. Undoubtedly it is a grace to be fortified by the Sacraments; but when the good God does not will it, that matters not. . . . *There is grace in all His gifts. . . .*"

She had said :

7 July

Ch. xii, p. 236

" From my childhood these words of Job delighted me : ' Though He should kill me, yet will I trust in Him.'¹ But I confess it was long before I was established in this degree of abandonment. Now I am there; the Lord took me and placed me there. . . ."

When spoken to of purgatory she replied :

" Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 302

" Oh, I feel no anxiety about it; I shall always be content with the sentence of the good God."

Advised to pray that she might not have attacks of hæmoptysis during the night :

15 July

" I would rather not ask it myself," she replied gently; " ask it for me if you will."

Then after a silence :

" However, this evening I will ask it all the same,

¹ Job xiii, 15.

because you wish it, but in my heart I cannot refrain from telling the good God to do only what He wills."

Speaking quite confidentially, she said :

"It was forced upon me to beg for the recovery of our darling father the day of my Profession; but I was unable to make any other prayer than this : ' My God, I beseech Thee that it may be Thy Will for Papa to recover.' "

"At the moment of our great trials, when it was my turn to intone the psalms in choir, if you only knew with what abandonment I would say out loudly the verse : '*In te, Domine, speravi.*' " ^{20 July}

Her novices one day expressed their grief at seeing her suffer so much, and their fear that she might have still greater sufferings to endure.

"You are quite wrong," she replied, "to think of the sorrows that the future may bring; it is as though interfering with the Divine plans. We who run in the Way of Love must never torment ourselves about anything." <sup>23 July
Ch. xii, p. 23.</sup>

"I am going to implore the Blessed Virgin to relieve your oppression," said a Sister to her.

"No, they should *be let do as they will* up there," she replied. ^{17 Aug.}

"When we have prayed to the Blessed Virgin and she does not grant our petition, it is a sign that she ^{23 Aug.}

¹ Ps. xxx, 1 : "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped."

must have some good reason for not doing so; we ought not to insist."

She was reminded that she had begged her Divine Mother to bear this message to Jesus: "Tell Him never must He feel in aught constrained with me. . . ."

23 Aug.

"Yes," she exclaimed, "and I do not repent of it!"

Someone, seeking to learn if she desired to know the date of her death, Thérèse made answer:

25 Aug.

"Oh no, not at all; that troubles me very little, I assure you."

"It is very hard to suffer without interior consolation, is it not?"

"Yes, but it is a suffering without anxiety; I am content to suffer as the good God wills it."

She fears that she has failed in abandonment:

11 Sept.

"I am afraid that I have had *fear* of death," she avowed one day confidentially, "because I suddenly said: 'What is it? . . . How shall I meet death?' But I have no fear of what will follow, that is certain. Besides, *I resigned myself immediately to the good God. . . .*"

Being to all appearances in her death agony, she said:

14 Sept.

"Yet the doctor had told me that I would have no agony. . . . But, after all, I am quite willing to have it."

"If you got your choice?"

"I would choose nothing!"

ARTICLE II

Simplicity, the Distinctive Characteristic of St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus

"We wish that the secret of Sr Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus' sanctity should not remain hidden from anyone of our sons."
—H.H. BENEDICT XV.

St. Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus had sung to the Queen of Heaven:

*The number of the lowly on earth is great indeed,
And, sweet Mother, without trembling they may raise their
eyes to thee,
For thou didst tread the common path, showing where it
doth lead,
That unto Heaven's portals their sure Guide thou mightest
be.*

"Pourquoi
je t'aime,"
p. 429

Thérèse, "the little Flower" of Mary, had studied and well understood the perfect model of *simplicity* in the service of God, given us by this Mother of all mankind, Mother, consequently, of all "little souls," of whom "the number on earth is great indeed." Therefore she said to her with gratitude:

By the constant practice of *virtues the most lowly*,
The narrow path to Heaven thou for us hast rendered
clear. . . .

Id., p. 427

It must, indeed, be admitted that Thérèse, walking in this "little way," was exploring, if not the unknown, at least a pathway too often deserted since the time of the Virgin Mother. Have there been many souls who have so well understood the lessons of Nazareth, and was she not destined by her life,

which was quite ordinary, but of a fidelity supernatural and sustained, to render yet more clear the outlines of the "strait way"?

This is what Pope Benedict XV affirms in his memorable discourse on the heroicity of the virtues of St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus.

At the risk of exceeding the limits of a programme which is concerned solely with the "spirit" of the Saint, the following article will point out what we might call in her a special vocation to simplicity.

SECTION I

Simplicity, the Characteristic of her Life

Many circumstances have already given proof that, in the life of our Saint, all is ordinary, everything is hidden. She has in reality suffered much, but without other form of assistance from heaven than those hidden graces by which, according to the ordinary ways of His Providence, God sustains faithful souls.

In order that He might the better draw her into her "little way of humility," God throws, as it were, a veil over the gifts which He has bestowed upon her, and carefully conceals those which He has in reserve for her. Therefore, at Lisieux in her childhood, the exceptional qualities of her intellect often seemed to be unrecognized except by her father and sisters.

Speaking confidentially, she said:

"Often the intelligence of others was praised in my presence, but mine—never. I concluded then

that I had none, and resigned myself to the privation."

At fifteen years of age, when she crosses the threshold of the Carmel, she does not hear, as is usual in these solemn circumstances, words of encouragement, almost of praise. On the contrary, the Superior of the convent, who remains always opposed to the entrance of the young girl, addresses to her an allocution almost harsh, which he terminates thus, addressing the Prioress: "In fine, Reverend Mother, I obey Monseigneur, of whom I am only the delegate, but I hope that the community may not have to repent later on of having received so young a postulant."

Souv. inédit

Once within the holy ark, far from being spoiled because of her youthfulness, she is unsparingly corrected.

Ch. vii, p. 1

Ch. ix, p. 1

When proposed to the Chapter—by secret vote—for her Reception and her Profession, several nuns, who do not approve the presence of three sisters in the same convent, refuse their suffrages.

Dépositions
Procès

Although, later, the formation of the novices is entrusted to her, yet this charge is not given her with honour; she has not the title of Mistress, but is merely considered as "the senior of the novitiate," which she ought to have left three years after her Profession. Owing to this arrangement, she remained there until her death, without having ever taken in the Conventual Chapter a place which came to her by right.

In fine, like St John of the Cross, of whom several of his contemporaries said, "He is a religious rather below the ordinary level," Thérèse is so hidden, she

Ch. xii, p. 234

is accounted of so little importance in the convent, that certain Sisters, seeing her ill, questioned amongst themselves as to what could possibly be written of her after her death.

As to the holy child herself, she is glad of this state of obscurity, and does not desire to deviate from her path of simplicity even after her life on earth, as is proved in the following instance :

A novice ventures this reflection :

“ You have so loved the good God that He will work wonders for you ; we shall find your body incorrupt.”

Souv. inédits

“ Oh no, not *that* wonder,” replies Thérèse ; “ that would be to depart from my ‘ little way of humility.’ *There must be nothing that could make little souls envy me.*”

If, after this rapid glance over her very simple exterior life, we consider her interior life, it will be found equally unpretentious and without outward show, in such sort that she received no consolations, which even those souls whom God leaves most in desolation “ could envy.”

Ch. iii, p. 43

She has passed “ through many a trial before tasting of the delicious fruit of entire abandonment and perfect love.”

Ch. ix, p. 161

She confides to us that in her great trial against Faith “ it is not a veil but a wall which rises up even to the heavens, and hides from her the starry firmament.” She had told us at the beginning of her religious life : “ It is in a dark tunnel that I am

A.,
Sept., 1890

walking"; and, a few years later: "Jesus ever sleeps in the little barque of my heart; hence I sometimes ask myself if God really loves me."

Ch. viii, p. 13

Id., p. 137

Also, when speaking to her of the consolations that certain souls receive:

"I tell myself," she concludes, "that these consolations are not for me; that for me it is the night, always the dark night. . . ."

Ch. xi, p. 21

She has not the satisfaction of feeling herself capable of practising virtue, and declares that "Jesus will not give her provision for the future." It is from moment to moment, as occasions occur, that she asks and receives the strength to conquer self.

Ch. viii, p. 13

If she penetrates to the inmost recesses of the souls of her novices, it is without any supernatural communication, as she affirms in a characteristic instance:

"Without being aware of it, *for I have not the gift of reading souls*, I had uttered words truly inspired."

Ch. x, p. 18

A few days before her death, Mother Agnès de Jésus questioned her: "Have you no intuition that makes known to you the day on which you will leave this world?" With a sigh she answered:

"O Mother, no, I assure you I have no intuitions. I know merely what you know; I divine nothing except by what I see and feel like you. If only you knew the poverty of my soul!"

24 Sept.

SECTION II

Simplicity, the Characteristic of her Virtues

No one will be astonished that in this universal state of simplicity St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus should by preference have applied herself to the practice of the little virtues, turning all things to account in order to prove her love to God.

Ch. vi, p. 112

“Far from being like to those great souls who, from their childhood, practise all sorts of macerations, I made my mortification consist solely of *breaking my will, keeping back a word of retort, rendering little services without making much of them, and a thousand other things of this kind.*”

Her examples of virtue are, in truth, so simple that they will give entire confidence to “little souls.” They can be displeasing to none but those spirits of whom Bossuet speaks, “to whom the simple and common life is repugnant because, beguiled solely by the senses and far from a sincere conversion, they will admire only what they regard as inimitable.”

Thérèse does not seek *great occasions* for the practice of virtue; *the very least, the most hidden*, are those of her predilection.

Ch. i, p. 17

From her earliest years she “has formed the habit of never complaining when things which belong to her are taken away, and she prefers to be silent rather than excuse herself when unjustly accused.”

Ch. iv, p. 54

She intensely loved reading, but “directly the clock struck the close of the hour devoted to this

recreation," she declared, "I made it a matter of duty to leave off immediately, even in the middle of the most interesting passage."

She keeps silence when her eldest sister dissuades her father from the project of having his "little queen" taught drawing. No one suspects the extent of this secret sacrifice. "And yet," she confesses later, "I so ardently desired to learn drawing that I still wonder how I had the fortitude to remain silent."

Ch. viii, p. 141

At the Carmel it is still to "*well-hidden little acts of virtue*" that she applies herself. She sings:

Ch. vii, p. 120

More than one fragrant rose blooms on Thy altar-shrine;
 There by Love led,
 She gives herself to Thee; another dream is mine,
 My leaves to shed! . . .

"La Rose
 effeuillée,"
 p. 417

She likes, for instance, to "fold up the choir mantles forgotten by the Sisters," and to find "a thousand ways of rendering them service."

Ch. vii, p. 120

She was discovered one day drinking slowly a particularly disagreeable medicine. "Be quick; take that off at one draught!" says the Sister. Our Saint then betrays herself:

"Oh no," she replies. "Must I not take advantage of the *trifling opportunities* to mortify myself, since it is forbidden me to look for greater?"

"Cons. et
 Souv.,"
 p. 277

Hence no *trifle*, however *inconsiderable*, appears to her unimportant; everything becomes a subject whereon to exercise her fidelity.

One evening she was seen putting outside the door of her cell a penknife which she had been using

Souv. inédits

during the day. Questioned on the morrow as to the reason of this act, she replied simply :

“ I had not been able to take it back to its place, and, as it does not belong to a cell, I did not wish to have it for the night.”

Souv. inédits

After the example of St John of the Cross, she would have interrupted her sleep rather than keep in reserve, for her habit, a pin over and above the three in use.

Id.

In the same way her poverty found occasion for activity in the most trivial circumstances.

Id.

In paring her pencils, for instance, she was careful not to lose any of the shavings of wood, so as to burn them.

Id.

She had for her use a lamp of which the wick could only be raised with the aid of a pin, but she never would ask for another.

All these little practices of virtue are so simple that they seem, at first glance, not to exceed the limits of an ordinary fidelity. But an experienced eye will quickly discern the heroism which lies concealed beneath the fidelity of every moment, and which the fluctuations of our earthly existence cannot overcome.

Then, if we be disconcerted in face of the abyss of generosity disclosed by these significant details, let us look again upon the web of her sanctity. The heart will immediately become strengthened by finding that every one of the threads of which it is woven

was picked up from amidst the *ordinary events* of life. Love alone gave to it its inestimable value.

The mortification of St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus is not alarming; she does not contrive skilful methods of torturing herself; *she finds her sacrifices in the events ordained by Providence just as they happen to occur.*

During her first year in the Carmel they gave her cider in the refectory instead of a home-made and less strengthening beverage. But she was placed near to a good old Sister who shared the same exception and the same bottle of cider. Now, this nun, afflicted with a malady which made her suffer much from thirst, did not perceive that she left scarcely any for her young neighbour, who, on her side, not daring to take water for fear of humiliating Sister ——, deprived herself almost entirely of drinking anything.

Souv. inédit.

In the kitchen they soon came to know her, but if it was to admire her in secret, most frequently it was to turn to profit the *remains* of the repasts. . . . Thus very often her repast consisted during several consecutive days, of fragments of fried fish as dry as a board, so many times were they reheated.

Id.

At last, at the end of seven years of this régime, God was pleased to put a stop to it. One of her companions observed it, and with much emotion said to the Prioress: "Mother, it is my duty to warn you that the health of this poor little Sr Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus is being destroyed."

But it was *with joy* that she seized the opportuni-

ties of renouncement *put within her reach by the ordinary life.*

Ch. vii, p. 128

One evening, after Compline, she seeks in vain for her lantern, which another Sister had taken by mistake. This accident will oblige her to spend an entire hour in the dark, just when she had greatly counted on doing some work. No matter; "*instead of feeling vexed, she is happy* in thinking that poverty consists in being deprived, not only of things desirable, but of those also that are indispensable."

At her Reception, notwithstanding her youth and the delicacy of her health, the habit given her was of very great weight. Thérèse wore it always joyfully, letting no one suspect the fatigue it caused her, fatigue which she acknowledged only during her last illness.

"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 277

One day in the course of her novitiate a Sister, who wanted to adjust her scapular, caught her shoulder at the same time with the big pin used in Carmel to attach the scapular to the robe. For several hours the Servant of God bore *with joy this suffering which she had not sought*, and which, later, she qualifies with indifference as "light enough."

Id., p. 276

Prompt to accommodate herself to the will of the good God, she is most *careful to interrupt immediately her occupation when anyone knocks at her door*, not making one stitch more in her needlework, laying down pen or paint-brush directly, so as to answer without delay.

The very natural and easy manner with which

St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus practises virtue contributes again to set off the characteristic simplicity of the occasions seized by her for its exercise. It was without constraint, without apparent effort, that Thérèse showed herself joyous, charitable, ready to oblige, making us admire, without realizing it, this sublime degree of perfection, where the operation of grace seemed to be but the spontaneous outcome of Nature.

Thus it was that being second portress, she, for several years, obeyed a senior nun whose minute particularities were accompanied by a desperate slowness. The trial of patience was continual. It was of obligation to lay down a box in a special way, to seat oneself in such a manner, etc.

Souv. inédits

With a playful amiability which concealed her interior struggle and made one think that there was no need for self-conquest, the Servant of God, whose character was quite different, never let anyone suspect the violence of her struggle at times, in order to preserve the same invariable sweetness.

And this good nun said in her old age: "Oh, the dear little Sister! She was an angel, I saw that clearly. Also," she would add—but her words failed to convince anyone—"I can bear testimony to the fact that I made her very happy."

The same note of unaffected spontaneity is found again in the following instance:

An aged Mother, whom perfumes incommoded, would not have a single sweet-smelling flower at the foot of the statue of the Holy Child in the cloister.

"Cons. et
Souv.,
p. 287-8

One day, when a beautiful artificial rose had just been placed there, this good Mother immediately called our Saint with the evident intention of making her remove the flower. Wishing to spare her a humiliating mistake, Thérèse said smilingly :

“ See, Mother, how well they imitate Nature now. Would not one say that this rose had just been gathered in the garden ? ”

But if sometimes the combat is more than usually violent, yet it is by *most human and most simple* little methods that she *gains the victory*. We are convinced of this in the following recital taken from the *Histoire d'une Ame* :

Ch. x, p. 195

“ At prayer,” she tells us, “ I was, for a long time, near a Sister who was incessantly handling her rosary beads or some other thing; perhaps none heard it but myself, for my hearing is extremely acute; but I cannot say how much it tormented me. I should have liked to turn my head and look at the culprit, so as to make her stop the tiresome rattling. However, in my heart I knew it was better to bear it patiently, for love of the good God, in the first place, and also to avoid giving pain.

“ I kept quiet, therefore, but was sometimes worked up to fever-heat, and obliged to make simply a prayer of endurance. At last I sought for means of suffering with peace and joy, at least in my inmost soul; I tried to like the disagreeable little noise. *Instead of endeavouring not to hear it—a thing impossible—I listened with fixed attention, as if it had been a delightful concert, and my prayer,*

which was not the prayer of quiet, *passed in offering this concert to Jesus.*"

On another occasion it is by an analogous mode of action, but marked with a sweet joyousness, that St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus conquers herself:

"Another time I was in the laundry," she writes, "opposite a Sister who, while washing handkerchiefs, splashed me every minute with dirty water. My first impulse was to draw back and dry my face, so as to show her who was besprinkling me in this fashion that she would oblige me by working more quietly; but I reflected immediately *that I was very foolish to refuse treasures so generously offered me*, and I took good care not to show my annoyance. On the contrary, I made such successful efforts *to wish for a plentiful splashing of dirty water* that, at the end of a half-hour, I had really acquired quite a taste for this novel sort of aspersion, and I determined to come again as often as possible to a place where, happily, such riches could be had gratuitously."

Ch. x, p. 19

What Thérèse leaves unsaid is that this happily chosen place was the very worst from the viewpoint of light and air.

In fine, the *simplicity* of the Saint is found again, as always, *in the pure and supernatural intention* which animates every one of her actions. It is God whom she obeys in the person of her superiors; hence—she will reveal it not long before her death—she "acquires the habit of never considering whether the things commanded appear useful or not."

12 July

This rectitude of view *suppresses all returns upon herself.*

Souv. inédits

While she was a novice her mistress had ordered her to tell whenever she suffered from derangement of stomach. Although it cost her much to do so, she made it a duty of obedience, and, as she suffered every day from this trouble, she mentioned it every day. Then the mistress, forgetting her own order, reprimanded her novice for incessantly complaining, which reprimand the holy child bore without excusing herself.

The same desire to act with simplicity of intention reveals itself again in an avowal made during her last illness.

One of her sisters, authorized to go and see her, and afraid of having abused this permission during the time of the recreation, questioned her as to how she would have acted in similar circumstances.

20 July

"I would have gone straight to recreation," replies Thérèse, "without making any inquiry about you, careful that no one should perceive my sacrifice. If I had been called to the infirmary, *I would have purified my intention*, going there to give you pleasure, and not for my own satisfaction, so as to obtain graces for you that my self-seeking would not have won for you. And as for me, I should have derived great strength from those sacrifices.

"If, sometimes, I had acted contrary to what I proposed, I should not be discouraged, but would try to repair the failure by denying myself still more."

After this rapid survey, one naturally concludes with our Saint: "These little nothings are a martyrdom made up of pin-pricks." But this hidden martyrdom has won all glory for her: if to-day she is great, it is because, following the words of the prophet, "*she has not despised the day of little things.*"¹

"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 273
A., 1889

SECTION III

Simplicity, the Characteristic of her Spirit

Before studying the *spirit of simplicity* in St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus it is interesting to note that she, who was to be in all things the model of "little souls," learned only by degrees to understand the value of that simplicity which shone so purely in her when the work of her perfection was consummated.

Speaking of the glorious deeds reserved to the small number of heroes who, urged by a special grace, depart from the common ranks, she confesses that this special grace was tempting to her formerly.

As a young girl she was enthusiastic about Joan of Arc, longing to imitate her in some way; but Jesus made her understand that true wisdom lies in simplicity, that "it is not necessary to pass over the sea or to go up to the clouds in order to find it, that it is within our reach, under our hand."²

Ch. iv, p. 54

Later, in the Carmel, this attraction revived: reading in the Lives of the Saints the account of their

¹ Cf. Zach. iv, 10.

² Cf. Baruch iii, 29, 30, 38.

extraordinary mortifications, she, in her turn, desires to undertake these "great things."

Ch. viii, p. 129

"The attraction towards penance was given me," she writes.

But God permitted that she should be checked in this path, and she adds:

Id.

"The only mortifications allowed me consisted in mortifying my self-love, which did me far more good than corporal penances."

It happened that she became ill from having worn a little iron cross for too long a time; then was the full light given her:

27 July

Ch. xii, p. 231

"That would not have happened to me from so slight a cause," she explained afterwards, "had not the good God wanted to make me understand that the macerations of the saints were not for me, nor for the 'little souls' who will walk in *the path of spiritual childhood, where nothing departs from the ordinary.*"

She attained, then, without knowing it, that "perfect state" which Mgr. Gay describes thus:

"Holy spiritual childhood is a more perfect state than the love of suffering, for nothing immolates man to such a degree as to be sincerely and peacefully lowly. The childlike spirit kills pride far more surely than the spirit of penance."

3 Aug.

A few weeks before her death to a Sister who confided in her she recommended *moderation in penances*, "because more of nature than of virtue often enters into them."

20 June, 1897

She had written to one of her spiritual brothers:

"I know that a great number of the saints passed

their lives in practising astounding macerations in atonement for their sins, but, after all, the thought comes: 'In my Father's house there are many mansions. . . .'¹ Jesus said so, and that is why I follow the path that He traces out for me; *I try to be no longer preoccupied about myself in any respect, and that which He deigns to accomplish in my soul I abandon to Him without reserve.*"

Her simplified soul had, in truth, on certain points modified her manner of viewing things. For instance, formerly in order to counteract her sense of relish, she tried, while eating, to think of repugnant things, or else when taking food which appeared to her too savoury she would mix with it a bitter herb.

"But," she says, "I have since thought it more *simple* to thank the good God for what I found to my taste." 31 Aug.

Thus, in the refectory she does not practise other mortification than the abstinence imposed by the Rule, and the indifferent acceptance of whatever is served to her, good or bad. She has also her "little rubrics," which we quote in their charming simplicity:

"To the Little Jesus I offered whatever was *sweet*, to St Joseph anything of *strong* flavour, and the Blessed Virgin, too, had her share. When they forgot to serve something to me I was quite pleased, because then I suffered privation really for the good God." 24 July

¹ John xiv, 2.

In intimate conversation she was told of a holy priest who, through mortification, endured intense irritation of the skin without ever moving a hand to relieve it.

1 Aug.

"Ah," said Thérèse humbly, "we must think all mortification praiseworthy and meritorious when we feel persuaded that the good God asks it. If we are mistaken in the action, He is touched by the intention.

"But as for me, I should not have been able to forbear and to preoccupy my mind thus. I have practised virtue on quite other lines, following this opinion of our Mother, St Teresa: 'God does not, as we imagine, confine Himself to the consideration of a host of small things, and in nothing must we oppress our soul.'"

She had a special devotion and affection for the Blessed Théophane Vénard of the Foreign Missions.

21 May

Ch. xii, p. 250

"He pleases me," she explains, "because he is a *little saint; his life is quite ordinary*. He had a great love for his family; I do not understand saints who do not love their family. . . ."

In her *Histoire* the Servant of God expresses her admiration for the foundress of the Carmel of Lisieux, the Rev. Mother Geneviève de Sainte Thérèse, and her "happiness to have lived with a saint, not inimitable, *but sanctified by hidden and ordinary virtues*."

Ch. viii, p. 137

Id.

"Ah, this is the sanctity," she says, "which appears to me the truest and the most holy; this it is that I desire, for in it there is no illusion."

Speaking to her of spiritual consolations, of visions and revelations, she was asked if these did not tempt her :

“ Oh no,” she replied, “ not at all; no, I have no wish to see the good God while on earth, and yet I love Him.”

14 Sept.

“ *My little way* is not to desire to see anything; you know well what I have sung to Jesus :

4 June

“ Remember Thou . . .
That ne’er have I desired
To see Thee here below.”

“ Rappelle-
toi,” p. 393

One of her sisters said to her that, at her death, angels would come to accompany Jesus, that she would see them resplendent with light and beauty.

“ These imaginations do not help me; I can draw no sustenance except from Truth, that is why I have never desired visions; we cannot, while on earth, see heaven and the angels such as they really are. I would rather await the eternal vision.”

5 Aug.

This peace and this simplicity suffered no eclipse, any more than did her prophetic insistence upon desiring nothing for herself which might in the future discourage souls. And so, when they would have aroused her hopes of dying on July 16, feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, she exclaimed earnestly :

“ Oh, that would not be like my *little way*; I should then be departing from it to die.”

15 July

“ To die of love after Holy Communion on a great feast-day! It is too exalted for me; *little souls might not be able to imitate that. In my little way*

Ch. xii, p. 246

only the most ordinary things find place; all that I do must be within the reach of all little souls."

Asked, "How do you order your spiritual life now?" she answers, quite surprised at such a question:

4 Aug.

"My spiritual life now? Why, it is just simply to suffer, that is all. I do not even say: 'My God, this is for the Church, this for France . . . etc. . . .'
The good God well knows what He ought to do with my sufferings, since I have given all to Him to give Him pleasure. It would weary me too much to say to Him incessantly: 'Give this to so-and-so, give that to so-and-so.' I do it only when asked, and afterwards I think no more of it. When I pray for some intention, I do not offer my sufferings; I say quite simply: 'My God, give to this soul all that I desire for myself.'"

She had written in her *Histoire*:

Ch. x, p. 199-
200

"Complicated methods are not for simple souls, and as I am one of these, Jesus Himself has inspired me with a very simple means of fulfilling my obligations. He has made me understand the words of the canticle: 'Draw me: we will run after Thee in the odour of Thy ointments.'"¹

"O Jesus, it is not, then, necessary to say, 'In drawing me, draw the souls whom I love.' These simple words 'Draw me' suffice. Yes, when a soul has allowed herself to be taken captive by the inebriating fragrance of Thy perfumes, she could not run alone; all the souls whom she loves are drawn

¹ Cant. i, 3.

after her; this is a natural consequence of her attraction towards Thee."

"How *easy it is* to please Jesus, to delight His Heart!" she said; "it is necessary only *to love Him* without regarding self, without too severely searching into our faults."

C.,
6 July, 189

"Therefore, when it so happens that I fall into some fault, I rise again immediately."

Ch. ix, p. 1

"*One look towards Jesus* and the consciousness of our own misery atones for all."

C.,
6 July, 189

She drew from the holy Gospel all the nutriment of her soul, and could say at the end of her life:

"For myself, I no longer find anything in books; the Gospel alone suffices me."

15 May

She had written in her autobiography:

"It is the Gospel, above all, which is the source of my prayer; from it I draw all that is needful for my poor little soul."

Ch. viii, p. 1

Thus she "gathers in the Holy Scriptures and the Imitation a hidden manna, solid and pure."

Id.

Deploring the tendency of certain preachers to place the Blessed Virgin in an inaccessible sphere, she says:

"Oh, that they would show us virtues that are practicable! It is well to speak of her prerogatives, but it is above all necessary to teach us to imitate her. She likes imitation better than admiration; and then, her life was so simple. However eloquent a sermon on the Blessed Virgin may be, if one can

23 Aug.

only utter interiorly exclamations of surprise, small is the profit."

She recommended to her novices the practice of the most lowly acts of virtue.

"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 271

"Believe me, to write devotional books, to compose the most sublime poems, is of less worth than the least act of self-renunciation."

C.,
26 April, 1889

"Holiness does not consist in saying beautiful things; it does not consist even in thinking them, or feeling them. . . ."

C.,
25 April, 1893

"God has no need of our brilliant deeds, nor of our beautiful thoughts. If He desire sublime conceptions, has He not His angels, whose knowledge surpasses infinitely that of the world's greatest geniuses? It is not, then, either intellect or talent that Jesus came to seek here below. . . . He has called Himself '*the Flower of the field*'¹ to show us how much He cherishes *simplicity*."

¹ Cant. ii, 1.

CHAPTER III

The Love of St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus is perfected in the Spirit of Childhood, which establishes her in her "Little Way"

"Entire self-surrender is the highest region of love, and the loftiest summit of these heights is the Spirit of Childhood."—Mgr. Gay.

"Spiritual Childhood is the essential condition for gaining eternal life: the faithful of every nation should enter wholeheartedly into this way, by which Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus attained to the heroism of virtue."—H.H. Benedict XV.

"It is pleasing to God to make known throughout the earth her perfect practice of Spiritual Childhood, in which, pure and simple, she is shown to be a master."—H.H. Pius XI

CHAPTER III

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"At that hour the disciples came to Jesus, saying: Who, thinkest thou, is the greater in the kingdom of heaven?—

"Jesus, calling unto him a little child, set him in the midst of them, whom, when he had embraced,¹ he saith to them: Amen I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven."²

". . . And they brought to him young children that he might touch them. And the disciples rebuked them that brought them. And when Jesus saw it he was much displeased, and said to them:³ Take heed you despise not one of these little ones,⁴ and forbid them not to come to me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven. Amen I say to you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter into it. And embracing them, and laying his hands upon them, he blessed them."⁵

"Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Ghost and said: I give thanks to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father, for so it hath seemed good in thy sight."⁶

"It has ever been my desire," writes the Servant of God, "to become a saint; but alas! when I have compared myself to the saints I have always realized that there exists between them and me the same difference as we find in Nature between a mountain, whose summit is lost in the clouds, and the

Ch. ix, p. 12
et suiv.

¹ Mark ix, 35.

³ Mark x, 13, 14.

⁵ Mark x, 14, 15, 16.

² Matt. xviii, 1, 3, 4.

⁴ Matt. xviii, 10.

⁶ Luke x, 21.

obscure grain of sand trampled underfoot by the passers-by.

“ Instead of being discouraged, I said to myself : ‘ The good God would not inspire desires which could not be realized ; I may, then, aspire to sanctity, notwithstanding my littleness. For me to become great is impossible. I must bear with myself such as I am, despite my many imperfections ; but I will seek out a means of getting to heaven by a little way, very straight, very short, a little way wholly new. Ours is an age of inventions : nowadays, with the rich, a lift saves the trouble of climbing the stairs. And I, fain would I, too, find *a lift* to bear me up even to Jesus, for *I am too little to climb the rugged steps of perfection.*’ ”

“ Then I turned to the Holy Scriptures, seeking from them an indication of this ‘ *lift*,’ the object of my desires ; and I read these words which have issued from the very lips of Eternal Wisdom : ‘ *Whosoever is a little one, let him come to Me.*’¹ Then I drew nigh unto God, divining truly that I had discovered what I sought. Wishing to know what He would do to the *little one*, I continued my research, and here is what I found : ‘ *As one whom the mother caresseth, so will I comfort you ; you shall be carried at the breast, and upon the knees they shall caress you.*’²

“ Ah, never came words more sweet, more tender, to gladden my soul. Thine arms, O Jesus, form the lift which must bear me up to God. *For that, no need have I to grow greater ; on the contrary, it is*

¹ Prov. ix, 4.

² Isa. lxvi, 13, 12.

necessary that I remain little, that I tend towards littleness ever more and more. O my God, Thou hast gone beyond my expectations, and I . . . I will sing Thy mercies! . . ."

St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus has, then, found in the *Spirit of Childhood* the summit of her perfection, the ultimate expression of her love, the sole means for her to penetrate to the profoundest depths of the Heart of God.

"I am but *a weak and helpless child*," she says, Ch. xi, p. "yet *my very weakness* it is which makes me dare to offer myself, O Jesus, as Victim to Thy Love."

She is in no doubt as to her welcome; she *knows* Id., p. 217 that she is accepted, for "in order that Divine Love be entirely satisfied it must needs stoop to very nothingness."

"In the days of old, victims 'pure and without blemish'¹ were alone acceptable to the great and all-powerful God; to satisfy the Divine justice 'perfect victims must be offered.'² But to the law of Fear has succeeded the law of Love, and *Love has chosen me for a holocaust, chosen me, a weak and imperfect creature.*" Id., p. 216

Then, with a holy daring, she invokes in her behalf the Divine attributes of God. Not content with having won His love, and made claim upon His mercy, she sees even in His justice grounds for confidence.

Mercy is exercised towards the sinner in order to

¹ Cf. Exod. xii, 5.

² Cf. Malach. i, 8, 11, 13.

pardon; justice towards little ones in order to protect them.

It is because they are just that parents do not exact from their children more than they are able to give, that they protect them, maintain them, and bear with their defects. This human justice gives her an idea of the operations of Divine Justice, so infinitely good and indulgent towards the weakness of man.

F., 1897

"This Justice which affrights so many souls is to me a source of joy and confidence," she explains. "Yes, I hope as much from the justice of the good God as from His mercy; it is because He is just that He 'is compassionate and merciful, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy. For he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust. As a father hath *compassion* on his children, so hath the Lord *compassion* on us.'"¹

She remarks:

6 Aug.

"Cons. et
Souv.,
p. 264

"Even in the homes of the poor, they give to the little child what is necessary for him. But when he has grown up, his father will maintain him no longer, and says to him: 'Now work; you can provide for yourself.' Well, it was to escape ever hearing such words," she adds, "that I have never wished to grow up, feeling incapable of gaining life for myself, the eternal life of heaven."

She continues, a few weeks before her death:

6 Aug.

"I cannot trust to any of my works in order to have confidence. Thus, a very few days before my condition became worse, several Carmels asked that the Suffrages of the Order be applied to Sisters

¹ Ps. cii, 8, 13, 14.

deceased.¹ I failed at first for lack of time, and now that I am more ill I have been dispensed. Yet I should have liked the satisfaction of saying to myself: 'I have fulfilled all my obligations.'

"But the good God very quickly showed me that I was too little to have ever been able in my life to pay even one of my spiritual debts, and that He willed me to be in this poverty. That was a real light and a real grace. Then, with great interior sweetness, I repeated the prayer of St John of the Cross: 'Do Thou pay all debts'; and I have since experienced great peace in feeling myself absolutely poor, relying on the good God alone for all."

Smiling, she said:

"My patrons in heaven, my favourites, are those who have stolen it, like the Holy Innocents and the good thief. The great saints have earned it by their works; as for me, I will imitate the thieves; I will have it by *ruse*, a ruse of love which will open its gates to me and to poor sinners. The Holy Ghost encourages me, saying in the Book of Proverbs:

"'O little ones, come and learn subtilty of me.'"²

The special "subtily" taught her was that of comprehending that the delights of the Lord being "to be with the *children* of men,"³ she ought, in her spiritual life, to copy all the charms of childhood,

¹ Our Constitutions prescribe recitation of the Office of the Dead at each announcement of a death in the monasteries of the Order.

² Cf. Prov. i, 4; viii, 5.

³ Prov. viii, 31.

"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 263

even the ingenuously childlike ways of the very little ones towards the father who cherishes them.

"Jésus Seul,"
p. 406

"As a little child would I fain love Thee . . ."
she says to the good God.

Id.

Delicate, tender, childlike love
My caresses, Lord, to Thee shall prove. . . .

Again, she sings :

"Mon Ciel à
moi," p. 400

To call Him *Father*—just *His child* to be,
Behold my Heaven here !

The author of the "Imitation" has said that the deep love of the soul, on the one hand, and of God on the other, is productive of a "familiarity astonishing beyond measure,"¹ and we see the Servant of God, with a holy daring, apply to herself the words of Isaias: "You shall be nursed, carried at the breast, and caressed upon the knees. . . ."²

After looking at a picture which represents our Lord and two little children, the smaller of whom is on His knee and caresses Him, while the other, more timid, respectfully kisses His hand, she says quaintly :

July

"As for me, I am this wee child who has climbed up on our Lord's knee, who raises his little head towards Him and embraces Him without fear. The other does not please me so well; he behaves with the reserve of a grown-up person. . . ."

Another day, alluding to a passage of Holy Scripture—"The Seraphim covered their faces with their wings in the presence of God"³—she protests :

¹ "Imit." II, i, 1 : "*familiaritas stupenda nimis.*"

² Cf. Isa. lxvi, 12, 13.

³ Cf. Isa. vi, 2.

"Someone said to me that in heaven I should be placed amidst the Seraphim. If that should happen, I shall not imitate them; I shall take care not to cover my face with my wings. If I did, I should not then see the good God; it would appear as though I feared Him, and how would it be possible for me to caress Him or be caressed." 24 Sept.

But these exuberances escaped from a loving soul do not essentially constitute the spirit of childhood; they must be taken in conjunction with the context of the preceding chapters replete with strength and practical sense, and of the following quotations, which complete the exposition of *her doctrine* concerning the "little way."

Here is first the definition that she gives of the childlike soul:

"To be little is to recognize our nothingness, not to be discouraged by our faults, for children fall often, but are too small to hurt themselves much." 6 Aug

This is why she sings:

In remaining little find I my peace;
Thus, when I fall upon the way
Doth Jesus take me by the hand,
Quickly I rise, He is my stay.

"Ma Paix et
ma Joie,"
p. 412

"For my part," she wrote to one of her sisters, "I find perfection quite easy to practise; in truth, I have learnt that to appeal to the Heart of Jesus suffices. Consider a little child who has just displeased his mother, be it by flying into a passion or by disobeying her. If he hides in a corner, and sulks and cries for fear of being punished, his mama

L.,
12 July, 1896

will certainly not pardon his fault; but *if he comes and holds up his little arms to her, saying, 'Kiss me, mama; I'll not do it any more,'* will she not at once embrace him tenderly, forgetting all that he has done? . . . Yet she well knows that her dear little one will be naughty again on the next occasion; but that makes no difference, and *if he always appeals to her heart, never will he be punished.* . . .

4 Sept.
Ch. xii, p. 246
F.,
13 July, 1897
“This is how I have acted towards the good God, and this is why I shall be so well received by Him.”

She writes in the same strain to one of her spiritual brothers:

“This gentle Saviour has long since forgotten your infidelities; your desires of perfection are alone present to Him to rejoice His Heart. I beseech you remain no longer at His feet; *follow this first impulse which will carry you straight to His arms.*

“It seems to me that it is only when His own chosen ones make a habit of their infidelities, and do not ask His pardon, that He can say: ‘These wounds which you see in the midst of My hands, with these was I wounded in the house of them that love me.’¹

“For those who love Him and who after each little fault come and *throw themselves into His arms*, begging His forgiveness, the Heart of Jesus thrills with joy. He says to His angels what the father of the prodigal son said to his servants: ‘Put a ring on his hand . . . and let us rejoice. . . .’² Oh,

¹ Cf. Zach. xiii, 6.

² Cf. Luke xv, 22.

the goodness and the merciful love of the Heart of Jesus, how little are they known! True it is that to share in these treasures we must humble ourselves, must acknowledge our nothingness, and this many souls are unwilling to do. . . .”

Sure of pleasing God in her Way of Childhood, and hoping that in it she can never sin but through frailty, because utterly distrusting herself she places all her trust in God, she says with charming grace :

“ I shall have the right to make little slips even till my death, without offending the good God, if I am humble, if I remain quite little. Look at little children; they never cease breaking and tearing things, they are continually tumbling, though at the same time loving their parents dearly and being most tenderly loved by them.” 7 Aug.

In the same sense she affirms :

“ Little children are not damned.” 10 July

Let us hear what she says of her Holy Communions :

“ Cons. et
Souv., ”
p. 295

“ At the time of Holy Communion, I sometimes picture my soul under the figure of a wee child of three or four years, who, at play, has got its clothes tossed and stained. These misfortunes have befallen me in battling with souls. But very soon the Blessed Virgin hastens to my aid : quickly she takes off my soiled little pinafore, smooths my hair and adorns it with a pretty ribbon or simply with a little flower . . . and this suffices to render me pleasing, and enables me to sit without blushing at the Banquet of Angels.”

Concerning her prayer and acts of thanksgiving, in which she very rarely receives consolation, she writes :

Ch. viii, p. 132

" I ought to attribute the aridity of my soul to my lack of fervour and fidelity ; I ought to grieve because I very often fall asleep during my prayer and my thanksgiving. Well, I do not grieve. I reflect that little children, when they sleep, are as pleasing to their parents as when they are awake. I reflect that the Lord takes our frailty into account, that He remembereth we are dust."¹

In all her prayers she maintained the same attitude :

Ch. x, p. 187

" In order to be heard, it is not necessary to read from a book a beautiful form of prayer to suit the circumstances ; if it were so, how greatly to be pitied should I be ! I act just as children do who cannot read ; I say quite simply to the good God what I want to tell Him, and He always understands me."

Id., p. 188

We find the following written in confidence to one of her " spiritual brothers " :

F., 1897

" Sometimes, when I read certain treatises where perfection is set forth as beset by a thousand obstacles, my poor little head grows very soon weary. I close the learned book which puzzles my brain and dries up my heart, and in its stead I open the Holy Scriptures. Then all appears to me in clear light ; one single word discloses to my soul infinite horizons, *perfection seems easy, I see that it suffices to recognize our nothingness, and to leave oneself like a child*

¹ Ps. cii, 14.

in the arms of the good God. I leave to great souls and sublime intellects books which I cannot understand, still less put in practice. I rejoice in being little, since *children only and those who resemble them will be admitted to the celestial Banquet.*"¹

She adds :

"It is well that the kingdom of heaven contains many mansions, for if there were none other than those of which the description and the way thereto seem to me incomprehensible, I should never be able to enter therein. . . . But if there are those for great souls, for the Fathers of the Desert, and for martyrs of penance, there must also be one for little children; our place is reserved there."

F., 1897

"Cons. et
Souv.,
p. 278

Several exercises of virtue were put forward for the purpose of learning her opinion as to which would be most efficacious for the attainment of perfection; in inspired accents she thus summed up her whole thought.

"Oh no; holiness is not in one exercise or another; it consists in a disposition of the heart which renders us humble and little in the hands of God, conscious of our weakness, and confident, even daringly confident, of His paternal goodness."

Souv. inédits

One of her companions was deploring not being as vigilant as she to direct her will explicitly towards God, and her inability to tell Him any of her good desires.

Here is our Saint's reply :

"This directing is not necessary for a soul wholly 11.

¹ Cf. Matt. xix, 14.

surrendered to Jesus. It is undoubtedly commendable to recollect ourselves, but calmly, gently, because constraint does not glorify the good God. He can well divine for Himself all the beautiful thoughts and the expressions of love that we long to find for Him, and He is satisfied with our desires. Is He not our Father, and are not we His little children?"

Souv. inédits

"You are *very little*, remember; and, when very little, one has not beautiful thoughts.

Id.

"You have no need to understand what the good God accomplishes in you; you are too little!"

She adds:

Id.

"The good God rejoices far more over His operations in a soul humbly resigned to her poverty than over the creation of millions of suns or the extent of the heavens."

Again, she would say to the novices:

"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 263

"You are wrong to criticize one thing or another, and to desire that all should yield to your way of viewing things. We want to be like *little children*, and little children know not what is best; to them all seems well. Besides, merit does consist in doing that which to us seems reasonable."

Id., p. 262

"We are *too little* to be able always to *rise above* difficulties," she told them. "Well, then let us pass beneath quite simply. It is very well for *great souls* to soar above the clouds when the storm is raging; as for us, we must only bear the showers with patience. If we do get rather wet—well, we shall get dry afterwards in the sunshine of Love."

She wrote to one of them in order to sustain her during a temptation :

“ If the dark night frightens the little child, if she complain at not seeing Him who carries her, let her *shut her eyes*; this is the only sacrifice that Jesus asks of her. By keeping herself thus calm, the darkness will not frighten her, for she will no longer see it, and very soon peace, if not joy, will be born anew in her heart.”

“ Cons. et
Souv., ”
p. 265

By a comparison which is dear to her she proves that her voluntary littleness is what best pleases Jesus :

“ *To belong to Jesus it is necessary to be little*, little as ‘ a drop of dew. . . . ’ Oh, let us be always His dewdrop; therein lies happiness, perfection. It is a great privilege; but, in order to correspond to it, how essential is *simplicity*, and how few souls aspire to be little and unknown! ‘ But,’ say they, ‘ are not the river and the streamlet more useful than the dewdrop? What can a dewdrop accomplish? We deem it fit for nothing save to refresh for a moment the fragile corolla of a wild flower, which is to-day, and will, to-morrow, have disappeared.’ ”

C.,
25 April, 1893

“ Ah, you know not the true ‘ Flower of the field,’ who has willed to inhabit our land of exile, and to remain there during the night of this life. If you did you would better understand the reproach of Jesus to Martha when He said to her that ‘ *one thing only is necessary. . . .* ’ ”²

¹ Cant. ii, 1.

² Luke x, 42.

To a novice discouraged at the sight of her imperfections she replies :

"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 261

"You make me think of a tiny child who is just able to stand upright, but does not yet know how to walk. Intent upon reaching the top of a staircase so as to get back to his mother, he lifts his wee foot to climb the first step. Fruitless endeavour ! At each attempt he falls without advancing in the least. Well, be like that little child ; by the practice of every virtue, keep on ever lifting your foot to climb the steps of sanctity ; do not imagine, however, that you will be able to mount even the first. No, but goodwill is all that God requires of you. From the top of those steps He watches you with love ; *won by your unavailing efforts*, He will Himself one day come down, and, taking you in His arms, will bear you away to His kingdom, never more to leave Him."

St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus had already said :

6 Aug.
"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 264

"To be little means not to attribute to ourselves the virtues that we practise, believing we are capable of something, but to recognize that the good God, when occasion requires, places this treasure in the hand of His little child to be used by him."

She reproves effort *to lay in a store of virtue* :

Souv. inédits

"You said you wanted to imitate me ; then do you not yet know that I am *very poor* ; it is the good God who gives me, according to need, whatever is necessary to practise virtue."

See what were her thoughts when given charge of the novices :

“I judged,” she writes, “at the first glance that the task exceeded my powers, and, very quickly placing myself in the arms of the good God, I imitated the little child, who, seized with sudden fear, tries to hide its golden head on its father’s shoulder, and I said: ‘Lord, Thou knowest it, I am too little to be capable of nurturing these Thy children; if Thou dost will to give them through me what is suited to each one, fill Thou my little hand, and, without leaving Thine arms, without even turning my head aside, I will distribute Thy treasures to the souls who come to me to seek sustenance.’”

Ch. x, p. 183

And soon she declares that “her hand was ever found full when there was need.”

Ch. x, p. 183

On the subject of God’s judgement, which in Holy Scripture is predicted as very severe for those who have the guidance of others, she dares to affirm that *little ones will be judged with extreme gentleness.*

25 Sept.

Ch. xii, p. 251

“For to him that is little, mercy is granted.”¹ It is possible to remain little even while filling the most exalted positions and even in extreme old age. If I were to die at eighty I should have remained as little as I am now, I feel sure of it . . . and it is written that at the end the Lord shall arise to save all the meek of the earth;² it does not say to *judge*, but to *save*.”

“I make every effort to be a very little child,” she wrote, “and so I have no preparations to make. Jesus must Himself defray all the expenses of the journey and the cost of entrance to heaven!”

L.,
12 July, 1896¹ Wisd. vi, 7.² Cf. Ps. lxxv, 10.

To the very last evening of her life she will be able to repeat :

"Aux SS.
Innocents,"
p. 437

It is you, Holy Innocents, whom God hath given me
For model here;
To be your faithful image I desire ardently,
Children dear.

A few weeks before her death she says :

11 Aug.
Ch. xii, p. 247

"Oh, never would I like to ask the good God for greater sufferings, for I am too little; they would then become my very own; I should be obliged to bear them all alone, and never have I been able to do anything all by myself."

And again :

26 Aug.

"I resemble a very little child. . . . I am without a thought of anything; I suffer simply from minute to minute, without even being able to preoccupy myself concerning what is to follow."

She could well sing, on entering heaven, what she had placed upon the lips of one of her favourite saints :

"Hymne de
Jeanne
d'Arc," p. 453

To Thee, O God of mighty power,
All honour and glory be!
To me a weak and timid child
Thou hast given the victory.

* * * * *

"And now, there is no one knowing anything of the life of 'petite Thérèse' who does not unite his voice to the wondrous chorus proclaiming this life to be wholly characterized by the merits of *Spiritual Childhood*. THEREIN LIES THE SECRET OF SANCTITY."¹

¹ H.H. Benedict XV (Discourse on the heroicity of the virtues of St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus, August 14, 1921).

CHAPTER IV

The Happy Fruits of the Life of Love

"Love is an excellent thing, a great good indeed: which alone maketh light all that is burthensome, and equally bears all that is unequal: for it carries a burthen without being burthened, and makes all that is bitter sweet and savoury."—"Imit." III, v, 3.

CHAPTER IV

The Happy Fruits of the Life of Love

The fruit of the Spirit is joy, peace. . . .¹

“THE just shall praise and rejoice,² for the sight of the Lord makes us radiant with gladness,” says the Holy Spirit. And as St Thérèse de l’Enfant Jésus unceasingly turned towards God through love, everything in her spoke of happiness.

In truth, the words that Holy Scripture applies to the just Tobias on the morrow of his trial were wonderfully verified in her regard: “All the rest of her life was passed in joy, and the more progress she made in virtue, the more peace did she enjoy.”³ She had ever on her lips a sweet smile which could give a misleading impression concerning the real value of her life; but only because one did not know its source, and had not heard the Servant of God exclaim:

“*What peace inundates the soul when she rises above merely natural feelings! There is no joy to compare with hers. . . .*”

Ch. ix, p. 169-170

“*From the time that Charity entered into my heart, making self-forgetfulness always necessary, I was happy.*”

Ch. v, p. 75

Joy, then, in her, was the reward of her renunciation, the *happy fruit* of her life of love, and, we may

¹ Gal. v, 22.

² Prov. xxix, 6.

³ Tobias xiv, 4.

say, "a virtue," as has been shown in a previous chapter, under the heading "Her Love—Delicate."

Behold the first indications of this tendency to expansion of soul.

The "little Thérèse," while yet quite small, liked to reproduce on the pages of her copy-books these words that she had heard: "A saint sad is a sorry saint."¹ It was to be seen again and again throughout her writing-books, even several times repeated on a single page, in various styles of writing. Evidently sadness had not much attraction for her, and she was already protesting that, in order to avoid being "a sorry saint," she did not want to be a sad saint.

27 May

"It is related of some saints," she says later, "that they were grave even at recreation; I do not try to imitate them; on the contrary, I have a particular devotion to the Venerable Théophane Vénard; his is a soul that appeals to me because he suffered much, and *he was always light-hearted.*"

Thérèse, too, was "always light-hearted."

At recreation her conversation was so pleasing, so spiritual, and even on occasions so piquant, yet without ever becoming derisive, that there was a charm in listening to her. "Where is Sr Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus?" would often be asked when she delayed in coming. And if the reply was, for instance, that it was her turn to wash the dishes, one would hear amongst the young Sisters (and more

¹ St Francis de Sales.

than one of the elders echoed the thought): "Then we are not going to have a laugh to-day!"

In the midst of this work, somewhat grave in its form, may we be allowed to quote briefly a few instances of the gentle gaiety of Thérèse?

One evening, in the infirmary, Mother Agnès de Jésus and her two sisters dropped asleep for a few moments from fatigue and sorrow.

"*Peter, James, and John!* . . ." she said to them afterwards roguishly.

Another time the infirmarian had caught a mouse in a trap, but it was only slightly hurt, and they were debating in low tones behind the bed as to the best mode of putting an end to it. At the same time, a novice, indifferent to the scene, was in tears as she watched St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus, who was suffering greatly, but who, wishing to dry those tears, beckoned to the novice and whispered:

"Do you hear about this mouse? Well, go and bring me the poor little animal, and put it here near me, and when the doctor comes presently I shall have it auscultated and looked after; we shall see which of the two patients will be cured the first."

On another occasion, as a conversation on the subject of holy poverty was terminating very gravely, she exclaimed:

"*Holy Poverty* [Sainte Pauvreté]! A saint who will never go to heaven! How strange!" 9 July

This caused a laugh, which was just what she wished. Thus did one always see manifested in

sallies of this kind her goodness of heart still more than her joyousness of mind.

She had sung :

"Ma Paix et
ma Joie,"
p. 412

Souls there are who in this world
Seek in vain a happy part;
It is otherwise with me,
Gladness dwelleth in my heart.

In truth, too happy far am I,
Doing always what I will;
Joyous then I well may be,
—Nothing ever goeth ill.

She reminded the novices that it would be inconsistent to drag painfully the burden of the religious life after having loudly declared on the day of their Profession "that they submitted themselves to the Rule willingly and gladly."

For herself, her will being always conformed to that of God, she could say in all truth :

"I do my will on earth."

She said also :

Ch. viii, p. 141

"I know *always how to find the means of being happy, and how to profit by my miseries.*"

"L'Aban-
don," p. 420

Naught can now disquiet
Nor vex my spirit more;
O'er earth, like lark at morn,
My soul knoweth to soar.
Beyond the sombre clouds
The sky still blue remains;
In truth, we touch the shore
Where the good God reigns.

And to a novice :

"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 274

"The soul is reflected in the countenance. Like to a little child always content, your countenance should invariably be calm and serene."

She wished never to hear the expression "Life is sad."

"It is *exile that is sad*, not life," she would reply. "This beautiful name 'Life' ought to be reserved for that which shall never die; and since we possess it even in this world, *life is not sad, but joyous, joyous exceedingly.*"

"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 300

A few extracts have already been quoted from her poem "My Song of To-day," in which her spirit of holy abandonment proposes to face only the single *to-day*—an admirably practical means of banishing all anxiety. We read in the same poem:

What matters it to me, Lord, if the future sombre be?
To pray Thee for the morrow—ah no, not there my way:

"Mon chant
d'aujourd'hui,"
p. 377

* * * * *

O give to me Thy love, and keep me in Thy grace
For this one day!

She says later:

"I suffer only for the moment present; it is through thinking of the future and the past that we become discouraged and despair." 19 Aug.

"The heart satisfied with God enjoys a perpetual feast,"¹ saith Holy Scripture. As Thérèse was always satisfied with God, her soul abounded with joy, even on her bed of sickness, from whence comes this avowal:

"I am present at a spiritual wedding feast all the day." 9 July

"How happy does the Lord make me! How easy and how sweet it is to serve Him on earth. . . ."

Ch. x, p. 196

¹ Cf. Prov. xv, 15.

It was indeed by serving Him that she partook of the good things of the feast.

One day, when she deprived herself of leading the conversation back to a subject that interested her, she said :

19 July

“ Had I acted otherwise, *I should not have been happy.*” In other words, “ If I had not yielded up to Jesus the fruits of my love, I should not have tasted thereof myself.”

But, as her efforts were real and sustained, she admits that she sat always at this richly laden table.

Speaking of her early youth in the world, she writes :

Ch. v, p. 80

“ The practice of virtue became *sweet* and natural to me. At first my countenance would betray the combat, but by degrees renunciation appeared to me easy, even at the first moment. For one grace faithfully received Jesus bestowed on me a multitude of others.”

After humble mention of a few of her sacrifices, she draws attention to *their fruits of grace*.

Ch. vi, p. 113

“ By the practice of these little things, I prepared myself to become the fiancée of Jesus, and I cannot say how much this fidelity *made me grow* in abandonment, humility, and the other virtues.”

Later on, having vanquished by dint of assiduous charity a natural antipathy, we hear this avowal :

Ch. ix, p. 172

“ I attribute *the deep interior peace which is my portion* to a certain combat in which I was victorious. Since this triumph, the forces of heaven come to my aid, for they could not suffer me to be wounded after having fought so valiantly.”

“Charity alone can enlarge her heart;” and, Ch. ix, p. 174
having diligently applied herself to its study, she exclaims :

“Yes, *the reward is great, even on earth*. In this Id., p. 171
path it is but the first step that costs.”

She relates an act of charity of which the remembrance remains, like “*a perfume, a breath from heaven*,” for, while she was accomplishing it, “the Lord had flooded her soul with rays of Truth, which so far surpassed the clouded glamour of earthly pleasures that not for the enjoyment of a thousand years of worldly festivities would she have given the ten minutes employed in her charitable work.” Ch. x, p. 194

And, the evening on which she did not demand back her missing lamp, but remained patiently in the dark, she declares that “*in the exterior darkness her soul was illumined with divine light*.” Ch. vii, p. 129

She had already said :

“If the soul corresponds with grace, she will find that she immediately receives light.” “Cons. et Souv.,” p. 266

These words and the following, already known, are too well adapted to the present subject not to be recalled.

“Since I have shunned all self-seeking, *I lead the happiest life that can be*.” Id., p. 275

“If people only knew *what is gained* by renouncing self in all things! . . .” Id.

“The yoke of the Lord is sweet and light; when we accept it *we feel immediately its sweetness*.” Ch. ix, p. 169

"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 276

She impresses upon the novices that to respond instantly to every call without a murmur is *a source of peace*, and she lets them see the recompense :

"Histoire
d'une
Bergère,"
p. 465

Consolation from on high
Will chase from your mind full soon
The thorns on your pathway strewn;
'Twill seem that on wings you fly. . . .

Ch. iv, p. 70

Apropos of sacrifices of the heart that she had imposed upon herself to counteract her too natural need of affection, she declares that she is "*no longer disturbed by any passing thing.*"

Ch. x, p. 182

In another place she dwells more at length on this same subject :

"How glad I am now of having denied myself from the outset of my life in religion. *Already I enjoy the reward promised to those who fight courageously.* No longer do I feel the necessity of refusing myself consolations of the heart, for *my heart is firmly fixed in God.* . . . Because it loved Him above all, it has become gradually *enlarged* so as to give to those dear to me a love incomparably deeper than if it were centred in a selfish and fruitless affection."

Ch. ix, p. 174

"Ah, how good God is to have lifted my soul from earth and to have given it wings! All the snares of the hunters cannot now frighten me, for 'in vain is a net spread before the eyes of them that have wings.'"¹

When not yet professed, she hears two of the Sisters, one after the other, and without a pre-

¹ Prov. i, 17.

concerted plan, express directly opposite opinions concerning her, each in good faith.

“Since that moment,” she says, “I have no longer attached any importance to the opinion of creatures, and this impression has so developed in my soul that from that time onward disapprobation and compliments all pass over me without leaving the least imprint.”

25 July
Ch. xii, p. 236

Let us mention as *fruits of grace*, given as a reward of her confidence, great discernment in the direction of souls, joined to profound personal detachment.

She speaks of her relations with the novices, and of the help given her by God.

“Since I have taken up my position in the arms of Jesus,” she says, “I am like a watchman observing the enemy from the highest tower of a fortress. Nothing escapes me; often I am astonished at seeing so clearly.”

Ch. x, p. 184

No anxiety of mind in fulfilling the charge confided to her ever disturbs her serenity, as is shown by this manner of acting which she so charmingly describes:

“I throw right and left to my little birds the precious grain which the good God puts into my hand; then I think no more about it. Sometimes it is as though I had thrown none; at other times it has happy results; but the good God says to me: ‘Give, give always, without being troubled concerning the result.’ ”

15 May

At another time it is—strange contrast!—a golden ray of happiness which shines in the dense gloom, for, without heeding her painful temptation against belief in the existence of heaven, she describes thus the state of soul of the “little flower”:

Ch. x, p. 152

“Jesus, finding it no doubt sufficiently watered, lets it grow *beneath the warm beams of a glorious sun*; no longer does He will for it anything but *His smile*. . . .”

And we see her still light-hearted and tranquil in face of death; these are some of the new “*fruits of joy*.”

Apropos of this passage of the Gospel—“He is risen, He is no longer in the place where they laid *Him*”:¹

29 May

“I am no longer, as in my childhood, accessible to every trouble; *I am, as it were, risen from the dead*, and no longer where I am believed to be. *I have reached a stage where I can no more suffer, because all suffering is sweet to me.*”

5 July

“Be not sorrowful at seeing me ill; see how happy the good God makes me. I am always light-hearted and content.”

Then, looking thoughtfully at her emaciated hands:

8 July

“Oh, how I rejoice to see myself wasting away!”

“Cons. et
Souv.,
p. 301

9 June

“How willingly would I help the ‘Divine Thief’ to come and steal me. I see Him in the distance, and I take good care not to cry out, ‘Stop, Thief!’ On the contrary, I call Him, saying, ‘This way, this way!’”

¹ Cf. Mark xvi, 6.

Her confessor having asked her, "Are you resigned to die?" she answered :

"Ah, Father, I find it would be to live that I should need resignation. . . . As regards dying, *I feel only joy.*" 6 June

She had said :

"Death is no phantom, no horrible spectre as represented in pictures. In the Catechism it is stated that 'death is the separation of soul and body'; that is all. Well, I am not afraid of a separation which will unite me for ever to the good God. What joy to see Him, to be judged by Him whom, in life, we shall have loved above all things." 1 May

"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 301

A. 1897

Not many days before her death she said anew :

"I have never had the desire to die on a feast-day; my death by itself will be a sufficiently beautiful festival for me." 2 Sept.

Thérèse, we remember, prayed :

"I desire that Jesus may take possession of my faculties in such sort that my actions may no longer be human and personal, but actions wholly divine, inspired, and directed by the Spirit of Love." 'Cons. et Souv.," p. 290

This complete empire of God over the human heart is the *resplendent fruit* of a life of Love, and the Lord deigns to give us assurance of it by the mouth of His little spouse.

One day, during her illness, she was gazing at the sky. A Sister spoke of it as a transport of love. Thérèse only smiled, but said afterwards to Mother Agnès de Jésus :

"Mother, our Sisters little know what I suffer." 8 Aug.
Ch. xii, p. 239

Looking at the blue sky, I was thinking only of the beauty of the material heavens; the other is more and more closed to me. . . . I felt at first distressed by that remark; then an interior voice answered me: 'Yes, *through love thou didst look at the heavens. Since thy soul is wholly surrendered to Love, all thy actions, even the most indifferent, bear the impress of this divine seal.*' "

Witness another *fruit of peace and of happiness*; this time accorded to humility.

If she declares her littleness, her powerlessness for all good, she finds in exchange the *firm support of Jesus and His blind tenderness*. She has expressed it in these lines :

"Au Sacré-
Cœur,"
p. 395

The tender love of a heart I need,
My firm support, and never to fail,
Loving all in me, even my weakness.

Not only does she believe that the Lord blots out the little child's faults, but, moreover, she sees in the Divine pardon a source of profit.

"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 280

"When we return to Him," she asserts, "He loves us *even better* than before our fault."

C.,
20 Oct., 1888

Yes, "in an act of love, even unfelt, *all is retrieved and more*. And Jesus smiles; He helps us without appearing to do so. . . ."

Nevertheless, she implores anew what she had asked on the day of her first Holy Communion :

Offrande,
p. 306

"I beseech Thee, O my God, to take away from me the power to displease Thee. . . ."

But if He does not do so, where will be the "fruit of her confidence" ?

Ah, she will gather it in the humble confession of

her failings, for she is confident that her goodwill makes her secure.

“I confess that I am far, alas, from practising what I understand, and yet *the very desire of it gives me peace.*”

Ch. ix, p. 171-172

Then she adds :

“I implore Thee, O my Divine Spouse, to be Thyself *reparation* for me.”

Prière, 16 July, 1895

She exclaims :

“*How sweet* is the Way of Love ! True, one may fall, one may not be always faithful ; but Love, knowing how to draw profit from all, very quickly consumes whatsoever may displease Jesus, leaving naught but humble and profound peace in the depths of the soul.”

Ch. viii, p. 146

And, recalling to mind the oblation of herself to Divine Love :

“Since that day,” she says with assurance, “*Love penetrates and surrounds me*; this merciful love each moment *renews and purifies me, leaving in my heart no trace of sin.* No, I cannot fear Purgatory, for I know that the fire of love is more sanctifying than that of Purgatory. I know that Jesus cannot will needless suffering for us, and that He would not inspire me with the desires I feel if He were unwilling to fulfil them. . . .”

Id., p. 148

Again, she writes :

“How could God allow Himself to be outdone in generosity ? How could He purify in the flames of Purgatory souls already consumed by the fire of Divine Love ? . . .”

F., 1897

"Cons. et
Souv.,"
p. 281

"It appears to me that for victims of Divine Love there will be no judgement, but rather that the good God will hasten to reward with eternal delights their love for Him, which He will see burning in their hearts."

In fine, there is realized for St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus that which she foreshadowed not very long before:

C.,
14 July, 1889

"It seems to me that the good God has no need of years to accomplish His work of love in a soul; one ray from His Heart can, in an instant, cause His flower to blossom for eternity."

And God has heard her prayer.

31 Aug.

"I besought Him," she said, "to operate in me the same work of sanctification as if I were to live a long time, by consuming me rapidly in the fire of His Love."

A., 1890

Yes, for her "*love has supplied for length of years*. God, because He is eternal, regards not the time, *but only the love*."

EPILOGUE

To die of love, behold my cherished hope !
When life's thread breaks, and sets my spirit free
None other good do I desire but God—
He my exceeding great reward shall be.
My only longing is His holy Love ;
“ May it consume me ! ” is my ceaseless cry.
To live Love's very life—behold my heaven,
My destiny. . . .

“ Hist.,” p. 380.

EPILOGUE

"O Jesus, my Divine Eagle! for as long a time as Thou wilt I shall remain, with eyes fixed on Thee; I long to be fascinated by Thy Divine gaze; I would become Love's prey. I have the hope that Thou wilt one day swoop down upon me and, bearing me away to the Source of all Love, Thou wilt plunge me at last into that glowing abyss that I may become for ever its happy Victim."—"Hist.," ch. xi, p. 221.

ON her death-bed St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus, one day, looking back with emotion on the principal events and graces of her brief life, said with a sigh:

"And yet, how little have I lived!"

Other people may, at first sight, wonder that, having to outward appearances accomplished so little, she should be honoured in heaven and on earth with such a crown of glory and of power. But why not grasp the lesson of the Divine Master: Love alone is of value in His sight, and if He entrusts to a child the mission to make Him known as He is in very truth, to make Him loved as He deserves, is it not in order that no one may fall into the error of confounding the value of works with the value of love?

In meditating on the First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians, Thérèse fathomed this consoling mystery and found therein assuagement for her ardent desires.

"Considering the mystic body of the Church, I could not recognize myself in any of the members

described by St Paul, or, rather, I desired to recognize myself in all. Charity gave me the key to my *vocation*. I understood that the Church, being a body composed of different members, the most essential, the most noble of all the organs would not be wanting to her; I understood that the Church had a heart and that this heart was burning with love; I understood that it was love alone which made the members work, that, if love were once extinguished, apostles would no longer preach the Gospel, nor would martyrs shed their blood. I understood that *love comprises all vocations, that love is all, that it embraces all times and all places*, because it is eternal.

“Then in the excess of my rapturous joy I exclaimed: ‘O Jesus, my Love! at last I have found my vocation.’ *My vocation is Love*. Yes, I have found my place in the bosom of the Church, and this place, O my God, Thou Thyself hast given to me; in the heart of the Church, my Mother, I WILL BE LOVE. Thus I shall be all; thus will my dream be realized.”¹

She had said:

“Thou knowest, O my God, I have desired but to love Thee alone; I seek no other glory. Thy love has gone before me from my childhood, it has grown with my growth, and now it is an abyss the depths of which I cannot fathom. Love attracts love; mine rushes onwards towards Thee, it would fain fill up the abyss which attracts it. . . .”²

¹ *Hist.* xi, 216.

² *Hist.* x, 201.

We have already noted in another place that, if St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus offered herself as "*victim of holocaust to the merciful love* of the good God," it is, as she remarks, "because many make themselves victims to Justice, while none think of making themselves victims to Love." And this cry escaped from her heart :

"O my Divine Master, shall Thy Justice alone receive victims of holocaust? Has not *Thy merciful Love* also need of them? On all sides it is ignored, rejected. . . . The hearts on whom Thou wouldst unsparingly outpour it turn to creatures, seeking happiness in miserable and fleeting affections, instead of casting themselves into Thine arms, into the ineffable furnace of Thine Infinite Love.

"O my God, must Thy Love remain disdained within Thy Heart? Methinks that if Thou shouldst find souls offering themselves as *victims of holocaust to Thy Love*, Thou wouldst consume them rapidly, Thou wouldst be glad not to repress the flames of infinite tenderness pent up in Thee.

"If Thy Justice—that Justice Thou dost exercise on earth—be satisfied to discharge itself on voluntary victims, how much the more must Thy merciful Love desire to enkindle souls, since Thy mercy reacheth even to the heavens.¹ O Jesus, let me be this happy victim; consume Thy holocaust in the fire of Divine Love!"

This time God no longer restrained His hand. Quite suddenly He dispersed the clouds obscuring faith, and the trials which notwithstanding these

¹ Ps. xxxv, 6, 7; Ps. lvi, 11; Ps. cvii, 5; Ps. cxliv, 9.

outbursts existed all through, and the Spirit of Love sensibly penetrated "His happy victim."

True, this was but a lightning flash, yet a flash from eternity which, without a miracle, would have set free from this world the soul of Thérèse.

"A few days after my oblation to God's *merciful Love*," she relates, "I was commencing, in the choir, the Way of the Cross, when I felt myself suddenly wounded by a dart of fire so ardent that I thought I should die. I know not how to describe that transport; there is no comparison sufficient to make the vehemence of that flame understood. It seemed as though an invisible force plunged me wholly into fire. But—Oh, that fire! What sweetness! One minute, one second more, and my soul must have been set free. . . ."¹

She wishes that all creatures may experience these ineffable transports, "because then God would be feared by none, but *loved* to excess."²

She continues with enthusiasm:

"To me He has given His infinite mercy. . . . I have no longer any desire save one—to love Him even unto dying of love."

We are now going to be witnesses of this death of love. . . .

"I know not what day my exile will end," the Saint had written; "more evenings than one, per-

¹ *Hist.* xii, 226.

² *Hist.* viii, 147.

haps, I may yet sing Thy mercies, O Jesus, here below; but finally for me, too, will come the last evening. . . ."

Behold, it is come, "this evening of love," and it throws its shadows upon a cross, a dolorous Calvary of many months.

Will Thérèse be disconcerted? Oh no!

"The death of love that I desire," she says, "is that of Jesus on the Cross."

And, before the ecstasy of the last moment, she uttered every *fiat*, while, like her Divine Master, draining the bitter chalice to the dregs.

"I have never seen this form of consumption," declared the doctor in attendance at the convent. "It is appalling what this young nun suffers, and with such patience."

The doctor's remark was repeated to her, and she was questioned; she replied simply:

"Can a little *victim of Love* find appalling what the good God sends her? It is true that I suffer much, just what I can bear."

"It is expedient to you that I go,"¹ Jesus assured His Apostles. His faithful and loving disciple utters almost the same words:

"If I am glad to die, it is because in heaven rather than here I shall be of use to souls. For me, what matters it, to live or die? I cannot well see what more I shall have in heaven than now; I shall see the good God, it is true; but as for being with Him, I am wholly with Him already upon earth."

¹ John xvi, 7.

Talking to her of the joys of heaven and of repose after the labours of this life, she said :

“ Oh, that is not what attracts me. What attracts me to the Fatherland above is the hope of loving God at last as I have so ardently desired, and the thought that I shall be able to make Him loved by a multitude of souls who will bless Him eternally.”

“ One sole expectation makes my heart beat; *it is the love that I shall receive and that I shall be able to give.*”

She continues in the same strain :

“ Behold my dreams of the future: to love God, to be loved by Him, and *to come back to earth to make Love loved.*”

Having looked long at a picture representing St Joan of Arc in her prison, she said :

“ The saints tell me, too: ‘ So long as thou art in fetters thou canst not fulfil thy mission, but later, after thy death, *then* will be the time of thy conquests.’ ”

And, on July 17, with prophetic accents :

“ I feel that my mission will now begin, my mission to make others love the good God as I love Him, *to give to souls my little way.* . . .

“ *I will spend my heaven in doing good on earth.* . . . *I will let fall a shower of roses.* No, I can take no rest until the end of the world. But when the angel shall have said, ‘ Time is no more!’¹ then shall I rest, because the number of the elect will be complete. . . .”

After a pause, she adds :

¹ Apoc. x, 6.

“ Would the good God give me this ever-increasing desire of doing good on earth after my death unless He willed its realization? No, He would give me, rather, the attraction to rest in Him.”

Enduring almost without respite sufferings of soul and body, but calm nevertheless, and ever abandoned to God as the child of His Heart, she reached at length the last day, the veritable “ last evening ” of her exile.

Then, more than ever, was it “ pure suffering without any measure of consolation.”

And during her terrible agony, which lasted for twelve hours, she would exclaim :

“ O my God ! O sweet Virgin Mary ! Come to my aid !

“ The chalice is full to the brim. Never could I have believed it possible to suffer so much. . . . I can find the explanation only in my extreme longing to save souls. . . . ”

“ O my God, Thy will be done in all, but have pity on me ! ”

Overwhelmed, as it were, by the storm, and expressing in her whole person the mortal anguish of the Saviour when He cried aloud to His Father, “ My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me ? . . . ”¹ she recovered herself somewhat, in order to make those present clearly understand that her innermost soul remained unaltered.

“ All that I have written,” she said, “ concerning

¹ Matt. xxvii, 46.

my desire of suffering much for the good God—oh, it is quite, quite true!”

“I do not repent of having offered myself as victim to Divine Love.”

The eve of this September 30, 1897, she had replied to her youngest sister, who begged for a farewell word:

“I have said all. . . . ‘It is consummated.’¹
Love it is that alone counts. . . .”

At a quarter-past seven in the evening, after the Angelus, when the Mother Prioress told her that her agony would perhaps be further prolonged, she made this courageous answer, but with a voice wellnigh exhausted:

“Onward, then . . . onward! . . . Oh, I would not suffer less! . . .”

Then, earnestly regarding her crucifix which she held firmly between her clasped hands:

“OH, I LOVE HIM! . . . MY GOD . . . I LOVE THEE!”

These words were scarcely uttered “in the night of faith” when, suddenly, she entered into ecstasy, her head leaning a little to the right, her radiant gaze fixed on high. What a look! What an attitude! One of her sisters sought to reproduce both look and attitude in a striking picture, but neither tongue nor pencil can faithfully render the intensity, the surprise, the transport of that heaven-illuminated gaze, nor yet her attitude, at once firm and tranquil, which showed the well-beloved of God in

¹ John xix, 30.

certainly as regards her judgement—well prepared “to stand before the Son of Man.”¹

It was, in a word, the rending of the clouds, heaven opened; it was Light, the arrow of Love, but this time light supreme, for there was no second miracle worked to keep this angel here on earth, and the thread of her mortal life snapped under the Divine Hand.

Now, where is the soul of Thérèse?

Holy Church has spoken: she is canonized, she is triumphant.

But *she is at the same time on earth*; God has given proof of this. She is fulfilling her mission of making Love known and loved, *the merciful love* of the Lord, His paternal goodness towards us sinners. *From the heart of the beatific vision she keeps watch over us, accomplishing wonders which surpass infinitely her immeasurable desires of love and of zeal to make God loved.*

¹ Cf. Luke xxi, 26.

PRAYER COMPOSED BY ST THÉRÈSE
DE L'ENFANT JÉSUS

*Act of oblation of myself as victim of holocaust
to the merciful love of the good God.*¹

O MY God, Most Blessed Trinity, I desire to love Thee and to make Thee loved, to labour for the glory of Holy Church by saving souls on earth and by delivering those who suffer in Purgatory. I desire to accomplish Thy Will perfectly and to attain to the degree of glory which Thou hast prepared for me in Thy Kingdom; in a word, I long to be a saint; but I know that I am powerless, and I implore Thee, O my God, to be Thyself my sanctity.

Since Thou hast so loved me as to give me Thine only Son to be my Saviour and my Spouse, the infinite treasures of His merits are mine; to Thee I offer them with joy, beseeching Thee to behold me only through the eyes of Jesus and in His Heart burning with love.

Again, I offer Thee all the merits of the saints, in heaven and on earth, their acts of love and those of the holy angels; and finally I offer Thee, O Blessed Trinity, the love and the merits of the Holy Virgin, my most dear Mother; to her I entrust my oblation, begging her to present it to Thee.

Her Divine Son, my well-beloved Spouse, during the days of His life on earth told us: "If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to

¹ This Act of Oblation St Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus carried in a copy of the Holy Gospels near to her heart night and day.

you.”¹ I am, then, certain that Thou wilt hearken to my desires. . . . My God, I know it; the more Thou wilt to give, the more dost Thou make us desire.

Immense are the desires that I feel within my heart, and with confidence I call upon Thee to come and take possession of my soul. I cannot receive Thee in Holy Communion as often as I would; but, Lord, art Thou not Almighty? Remain in me as in the Tabernacle; never leave thy little victim.

I long to console Thee for the ingratitude of the wicked, and I pray Thee to take from me the power to displease Thee. If through frailty sometimes I fall, may Thy divine glance purify my soul immediately, consuming every imperfection, like to fire which transforms all things into itself.

I thank Thee, O my God, for all the graces Thou hast showered on me, in particular for having made me pass through the crucible of suffering. It is with joy that I shall behold Thee on the Last Day bearing Thy sceptre, the cross; since Thou hast deigned to give me for my portion this most precious cross, I have hope of resembling Thee in heaven, and of seeing the sacred stigmata of Thy Passion shine in my glorified body.

After exile on earth, I hope to enjoy the possession of Thee in the eternal Fatherland, but I have no wish to amass merits for heaven; I will work for Thy Love alone, my sole aim being to give Thee pleasure, to console Thy Sacred Heart, and to save souls who will love Thee for ever.

¹ John xvi, 23.

At the close of life's day I shall appear before Thee with empty hands, for I ask not, Lord, that Thou wouldst count my works. . . . All our justice is tarnished in Thy sight; therefore I desire to be clothed with Thine own Justice, and to receive from Thy Love the eternal possession of Thyself. I crave no other throne nor other crown but Thee, O my Beloved.

In Thy sight time is nothing; one day is as a thousand years.¹ Thou canst in an instant prepare me to appear before Thee.

* That my life may be one act of perfect Love, I OFFER MYSELF AS VICTIM OF HOLOCAUST TO THY MERCIFUL LOVE, imploring Thee to consume me unceasingly, and to let the flood-tide of infinite tenderness, pent up in Thee, flow into my soul, that so I may become a very martyr of Thy Love, O my God.

May this martyrdom, having first prepared me to appear before Thee, break life's thread at last, and may my soul take its flight unhindered to the eternal embrace of Thy merciful Love.

I desire, O my Beloved, at every heart-beat, to renew this oblation an infinite number of times, till, the shadows have disappeared,² and I can tell Thee my love eternally face to face. . . .

(Signed) MARIE-FRANCOISE-THÉRÈSE DE
L'ENFANT JÉSUS ET DE LA
SAINTE FACE,

Rel. Carm. Ind.

*Feast of the Most Holy Trinity, June 9,
in the year of grace 1895.*

¹ Cf. Ps. lxxxix, 4.

² Cf. Cant. iv, 6.

INDULGENCES attached in perpetuity to the recitation of the above Act of Oblation, from, at the least, the * to the end.

Three hundred days each time recited by the faithful with contrite heart and with devotion.

A Plenary Indulgence once a month for those who shall have recited it each day during the month.

GIVEN AT ROME (S. POENIT.),

July 31, 1923.

She was tall of stature and slight, with golden-auburn hair and grey-blue eyes, the forehead broad, the mouth small, the features refined and regular. Her face, fair as a lily, was well proportioned, ever bearing the imprint of sweet serenity and celestial peace. Her every movement was full of dignity, full at the same time of simplicity and grace.

